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WIZARD™

No. 29

THE GUIDE TO COMICS

VIOLATED!

Art: Norm Breyfogle

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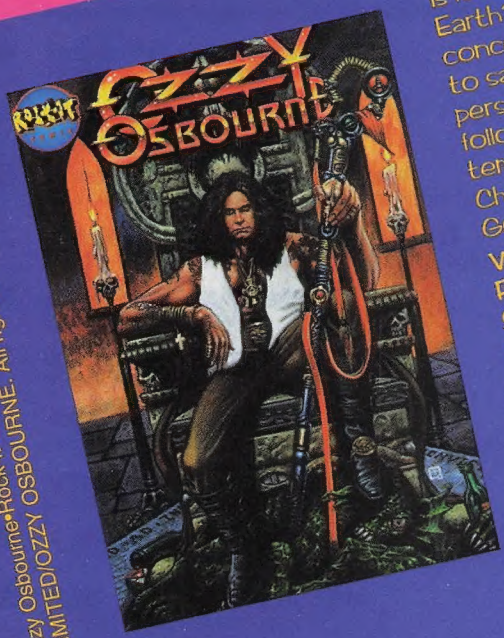

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WIZARD™

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Volume 1
Number 29
January 1994

TEKWORLD™ & © WILLIAM SHATNER.

WIN!

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LOOKS LIKE SPAWN SPENT SOME TIME ON THE SOLOFLEX™ LEVEL OF HELL THIS PAST YEAR!

Applaud us or pan us—we want to know what you think. Questionnaire on page 212.

Top ten things Bane coulda done to Batman if he was meaner. Check it out and snicker—page 298.

Best quotes of '93. See what everyone had to say this year. Check 'em out starting on page 226.

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Isn't Gareb's picture usually on the Publisher's Page? Find out about this guy in "Palmer's Picks."

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Geez! These guys look pretty steamed. Turn to the "Year in Review" article on page 54 to find out what happened...or didn't happen.

"There'll always be people who think they can get rich by buying a dozen copies of some trendy #1 and waiting six months..."
—"Ongoing Trends" on page 114.

SUPERMAN ™ & © DC COMICS.

So he looks almost the same--he still went through more changes than almost anyone else last year. I mean, he was dead, alive, and at least four different guys!
—"Hardly Recognizable" starts on page 128.

Check out the coolest action figures that no toy companies are making—the best homemade guys strut their stuff in "Figures on Parade," on page169.

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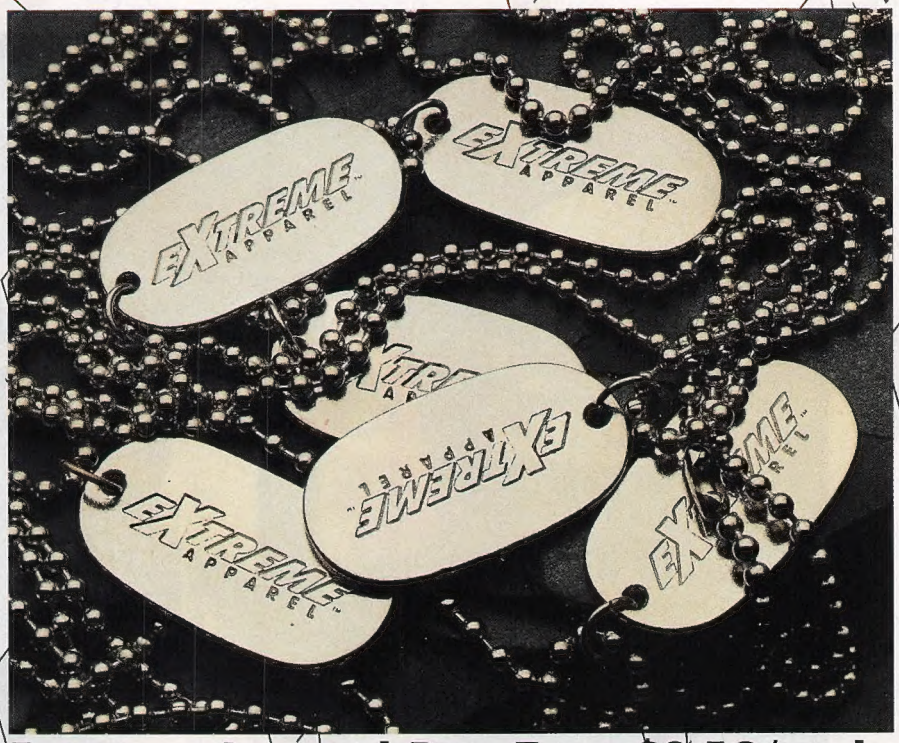

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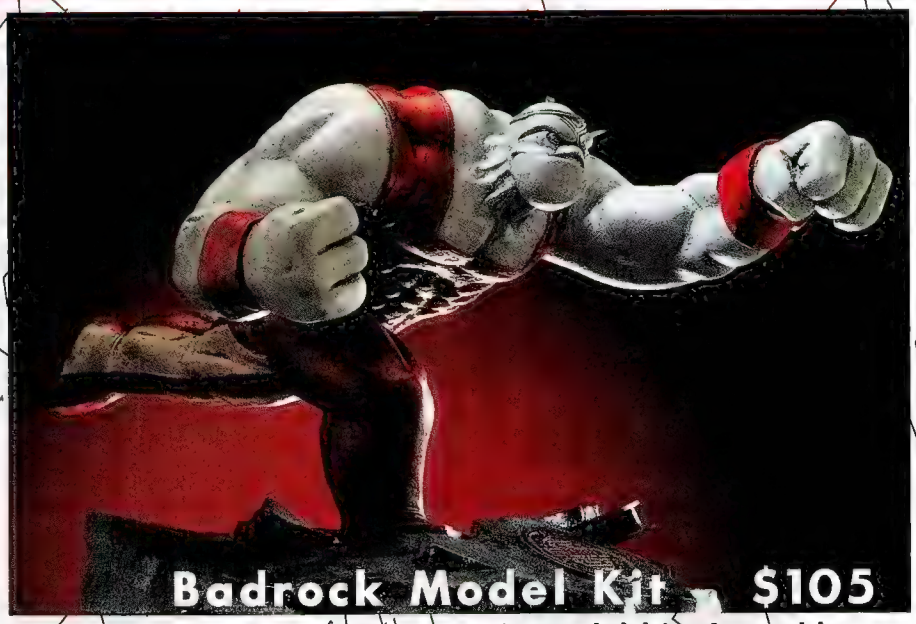

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A LETTER FROM OUR PUBLISHER

FORWARD THINKING

PHOTO BY J. SCHUYLER

I was at a very big show recently (I can't really remember which one, because I attend so many conventions) when a retailer called me over to his booth. He said that he had decided to call the last few years in the comic book industry the "*Wizard* Age of Comics."

I wasn't exactly sure how to take this. The past few years in comics have been extremely tumultuous, and I wasn't certain if the label was a good or bad thing. When I asked him to explain, he said that he thought that the comic industry is experiencing tremendous growth, and he felt excited to be a part of it. He went on to say that *Wizard* is a big part of the industry, and that the tone of this magazine—the whole feel of *Wizard*—is positive. It spotlights all the excitement in the industry, the forward thinking, the growth of "funny books" into a more legitimate business.

Needless to say, I was overwhelmingly flattered. He's essentially correct in stating that *Wizard: The Guide to Comics* is a positive magazine. While you will find the occasional negative views and reviews in this publication, it has always been my intent to spotlight what's good in this industry. We focus on the great stories, great art, outside-the-industry comic-related projects, and the late-breaking news that's sure to set the industry on its ear. We try to get fans interested in outside mediums by using comics as a bridge, we educate them about what to look for when selecting comics, we stress the fact that comics are meant for fun, and heck, with the help of artists like Bart Sears, we try to develop some of the untapped talent out in the audience. We even try to reel in people who have never picked up a comic, or who have long since abandoned them. There's no denying that there are problem areas in this industry of ours, but there is also a lot of good. Those good aspects of the industry are what *Wizard* is all about.

As for the forward thinking, we try to keep up with an industry that grows more complex every day, and I'd like to think we do a pretty good job. The staff of *Wizard* works at a Barry Allen pace: we're constantly in touch with the writers, artists, editors, publishers, distributors, and retailers who create the books that are this industry's lifeblood.

We're also in touch with the most important sector of the comic book marketplace: the fans. Roughly 285,000 pieces of mail came into *Wizard* headquarters this past year, most of them carrying praise, criticism, and complaints from *Wizard*'s audience. Some letters aren't just directed towards *Wizard*; we read what the fans have to say about almost every corner of this industry—their thoughts on the comics being published today, their feelings on creator ownership, what they liked and didn't like about the latest comic-related movie or toy or what-have-you. *Wizard* staffers, myself included, attend comic shows all around the world, and while we use this time to schmooze with our industry peers, we also get to meet the fans face-to-face. This way, we not only get to hear what they have to say, but we can find out more of the "whys" behind their opinions.

Thanks to all this information and feedback, *Wizard* is constantly evolving from month to month. We change as the industry changes, and we make sure no matter what that the comic fan who purchases *Wizard* feels satisfied that his $3.95 (or the occasional $4.95) has brought maximum enjoyment for money spent, and that he feels good about being part of the industry.

As for the growth of the comic industry, it's something that you see wherever you go—you really don't need me to point it out to you, though you'll excuse me if I do. The new Superman television show, the Batman and X-Men cartoons, and the upcoming live-action and animated projects featuring The Shadow, Spider-Man, Youngblood, Batman again, and countless others are all on or are waiting to hit the big and little screens. Toys, trading cards, video games, clothing: the list of what's been affected by the comic industry goes on and on, but that, unbelievably, is only the tip

THE GUIDE WIZARD TO COMICS

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of the iceberg. With international licensing potential still virtually untapped, and many more mediums left unexplored, the comics industry still has a lot of growing to do. If you think it's exciting now, stick around a while—you ain't seen nothin' yet!

1993 was not only a year of growth for the comic industry and for *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, it was also a year of growth for Wizard Press. We successfully launched two new magazines this year. By now you've all seen *Collector's Sportslook*, which is dedicated to the trading card industry, including both sports and non-sports cards. However, only a few of you outside the realm of retailers have heard of *ER*, our tabloid-sized retailer publication (*ER* stands for *Entertainment Retailing*, by the way).

In terms of content, *ER* is the exact opposite of *Wizard*. By that I mean that it's not intended for comic fans, but rather for comic store owners and industry professionals. It features articles on a wide range of topics, such as how to prevent theft and how (and how not) to make a business card that works for your store. We interview industry professionals, focusing on their thoughts about the current state of comics. A news section keeps retailers up to date with our hectic business, another section prints which comics are being spotlighted in next month's issue of *Wizard* so retailers can stock up on the books that will soon be on their customers' want lists, and we also run various surveys that can be filled out to help us determine prices in our comic and card price guides and rankings in our various "what's hot" sections. That and much more goes into this full-color 11" x 14" magazine, making it as important to the comic retailer as *Wizard: The Guide to Comics* is to the comic fan.

The reason I'm telling you all this here, in a forum geared more towards the comic fan than the comic retailer, is because I want you to get your local store owner onto the *ER* subscription list. Thanks to the hundreds of retailers who participate in *ER* and help fill it with tips on how become a smarter retailer, *ER* is an invaluable tool that will help your local store owner better his business, and that's ultimately to your benefit. Don't bug your retailer or drive him crazy, though—just show him this editorial, point out the last couple of paragraphs, and tell him to write to *Entertainment Retailing*, Wizard Press, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. If you're a retailer and take the time to fill out the surveys in *ER* every month (it should only use up 15 minutes!), *ER* will be shipped to you every month free of charge. It's our way of saying, "Thanks for the input," and our way of trying to help make things a little easier in our crazy business.

Speaking of business, there's a lot of companies out there making it their business to try and stuff junky products down your throat, claiming that they're the hottest thing going and that you're missing the boat if you don't shell out your bucks and buy 'em. Well, if you're a big collector and you want (and have the means to buy) everything out there, then go ahead, buy the world. But I have a word of advice for the fans out there who have limited funds and are finding it harder and harder to keep up with everything being offered: don't let anyone or anything talk you into purchasing something you don't want. I'm not saying that you should never sample new products, or that you shouldn't open yourself to new experiences: just make sure you're doing it for you, and not because someone told you to, or because you read somewhere that you have to own it. That's bull.

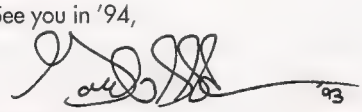
If you're getting something for you, buy it based upon your personal tastes, or if it looks intriguing, buy it to see if it's something you like. The most important aspect of collecting comics is your enjoyment of the books you buy. If you allow yourself to be induced into purchasing titles solely because of a good write-up, or because of a flashy gimmick that really isn't worth the price you paid for it, you'll find yourself owning too many books that you don't really want, and lacking the money to get the comics you really like. Too many people still buy into the hype, and too many people get burned by products that don't deliver on any level.

Don't be one of those people. Now more than ever, it's important to send the clearest message you can to publishers in the comic book industry. Only spend your hard-earned money on those books that you want to collect, and let the other products that are being offered either improve or be discontinued.

So in the end, you have the ultimate, most influential super-power in the comic book industry. Use it to your advantage. To sum it all up, a very appropriate phrase comes to mind:

"With great power comes great responsibility."

See you in '94,



Gareb S. Shamus

"THŸ LARGUE CĒSE"

Magic Words

Pat McCallum, Creative Director

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To start off this letter column, I thought I'd run a little something that popped up in the mailbag.

"The Plight of *X-Factor*"
by Amy Pronovost

When Stroman left this mighty book,
We all stopped for a second look.
Then Peter David left as well,
And we were left with Scott Lobdell.
He's biting off more then he can chew
(I think Quesada did that too).
The writing's good, the art's not bad,
But I think that we're being had.
The changes come in steady flows,
I hope the characters don't become psychos.
If we see 'Lex in tight elastic,
or find Forge wrapped up in plastic,
To find out that culprit's Rahne
who's nice, but sometimes is a pain,
If we see Guido quit a team,
or see Quicksilver's personality gleam,
I would drop the comic quick as he
could run from here to the nearest tree.
So heed our words, and listen well,
We're talking to you, Scott Lobdell.
If major changes do ensue,
We have no one to blame but you.
But for now you have our trust—
Be careful, though, 'cause it may rust!

Dear Wizard,

I have something very important to say, so I do hope you print this letter.

Now first let's go to an "establishing shot" shall we? The place: a Holiday Inn, Charlotte, North Carolina. The event: the Heroes Aren't Hard to Find 1993 Comic Convention.

Okay, you get the idea. Now here's what happened: I was fortunate enough to be there for all three days of the convention, and I was walking on air. Practically all of my favorite artists and writers were there and I got to talk with practically all of them.

Sounds great, right?

Wrong. Most (and I mean "most") artists were very cool when I spoke with them or showed them my portfolio or had them autograph my favorite comic, but some were not so cool. Some of them seemed to be kind of "stuck up." Like they were doing me a favor by even talking to me for more than a minute.

I know there's lots of people at a con, and they want to talk with as many people as possible, but it's serious fans of this medium that pay the bills for these guys, am I right? They should consider themselves extremely fortunate to be doing what they're doing in today's economy! Some guys acted like, "Oh no! Here comes another fan boy with his portfolio!"

Well, excuuuse me! Can't they remember when they were like me? A struggling artist who's simply in need of a professional's opinion?

I guess not. That time must seem light years away to them. Not to me. I'm there now. Trying my hardest to get somewhere like everybody else in this world. Listen, I don't mean to sound like a disgruntled fan from Hades, I just would like for those who have made it big to try and remember what life was like before deadlines. When the best thing in the world was the latest issue of Spider-Man or Batman, not money. There. I'm done. Thanks for listening.

Daniel Christian Garcia
Fayetteville, NC

Dear Wizard,

I have recently returned to comics after a ten-year absence from the hobby. I'm 26 years old and I have started to again enjoy something that I enjoyed when I was young.

But to my surprise, people around me can't seem to understand why a grown man would read comic books. You can't seem to read on the trains, waiting platforms, et cetera, without people giving you silly looks and stares as if to say, "What kind of immature person are you for not reading novels, business reviews, or some other articles adults should read?"

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But all I can say to these people is that I enjoy reading comics. It doesn't matter if you're 10 or 60 years old. A person has truly grown up or matured only if he/she can go back and enjoy what he/she has enjoyed in their childhood.

Alan Cabusi
Hurstville, Australia

And if they keep staring at you, just flip 'em the bird.

Dear Wizard,

Let me tell you about a story concerning gold and silver ink signing pens.

I was at a convention/comic show in Houston, Texas. While I was there I found out that Keith Wilson from DC Comics was there. I ran home and picked up my copy of *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #41 to get it signed. Just at the moment he was about to sign, a big blob of gold ink dripped out of the pen and onto my book. Then the tip of the pen came out.

Needless to say I was p'ed and my book is ruined.

To sum it all up: manufacturers of autograph signing pens should be 100% sure of their product before retail stores put it on their shelves to sell.

David Barr
Houston, TX

Whenever you use one of those metallic ink pens, shake it thoroughly, then draw a couple of lines on a piece of scrap paper to make sure the ink is flowing. It should then be safe to use on your comic. Your pen, which fell apart on you, was probably just defective. If you still have it, return it to the manufacturer, along with an explanation (be nice!) of what happened, and they should be happy to replace it for you.

Dear Wizard,

I have noticed that you guys have been taking a beating from some of the readers (and handling it well). I have a few things to say in your defense: You readers need to chill out. What has happened to your sense of humor, fun, and enjoyment? Some of you called the staff 10-year-olds in judges' robes (*Wizard* #26). You sound rather judgmental yourself. Some people can appreciate all forms of humor.

Guys, you're doing a great job; keep up the good work. Some of us learn how to enjoy the whole and not pick at the parts; unfortunately, some don't.

Clifton Eldridge
Weatherford, OK

Dear Wizard,

Comic books are (mainly) for kids, right? Well, why in the world are nearly all the superheroes adults? Here is a notice to all comic companies. *SOS: More kid heroes!!!*

B. J. Thevenin
Marietta, GA

In response to your distress call, check out *Prime*, *Robin*, *New Warriors*, *Night Thrasher*, *Nova*, *X-Force*, *Freex*, *Team Titans*, *Legionnaires*, *Superboy*, and *Harbinger*.

Dear almighty, all-seeing Wizard,

Ahem. Adrenalin rush to the head. Anyway, happy 25th to you! I've read this mag ever since issue #1 (well, with the exception of issue #2), and you've come a long way, baby. The overall quality has improved 100% since those early days, with better paper, more interesting articles, and original features. But through the classic X–Men/Iron Man debate, the convoluted Cable baby controversy, and other great topics and questions which you handled with a grain of humor, I've simply chuckled along, keeping quiet...until now.

Now before anyone gets the idea this is some simple-minded kiss-up letter, it's not; no, this Wizard has miles to go before he sleeps. I still think there's room for improvement, from the magazine itself (why the hell is This Month's Number Ones! still here?) to the attitude of the staffers themselves. I'm not saying to 86 the attitude, because it makes you unique among comic magazines, but you should definitely fine-tune it.

Anthony Punt
New York, NY

P.S. I was rereading *Wizard* #23, and I can't believe that no one can give poor old Jean Grey a decent code name! C'mon folks, she's celebrating her thirtieth anniversary this year! I thought about it and I've come up with one: Jean Grey, a.k.a. Psi! It sounds cool and mysterious, and, by definition, a psi is one who has psychic powers of some sort, such as telepathy and psychokinesis—abilities Ms. Grey possesses. What do you think?

Thanks for the kind words, Tony. *Wizard* is in a constant stage of change, always striving to bring something new to the table. As far as the attitude, we're behaving ourselves a little more. And Psi is kinda neat.

Dear Wizard,

When I was flipping through "Exposing Covert Activities" (*Wizard* #27), I discovered something very disturbing. I was reading the copyrights at the bottom of the first page when I saw "*WildC.A.T.s* and all WildC.A.T.s characters ™ & © Aegis Entertainment."

Aegis Entertainment?!?

I thought the whole idea behind Image was creator-owned comics. Now don't get me wrong, *WildC.A.T.s* is the greatest comic ever to hit the planet, but this really upset me.

So then I looked at *Deathblow*, *StormWatch*, and *Gen*[13]. All of them said copyright Aegis Entertainment! Then I looked at *Cyberforce* and *Codename: Stryke Force*. Those said Top Cow Productions! Is Aegis Entertainment Jim Lee's company, or did he sell all his books to them? Is Top Cow Marc Silvestri's company, or did he sell all his books?

Mike Lee
Gig Harbor, WA

All the Image guys still retain the rights to all their characters. Aegis Entertainment is Jim Lee, Top Cow is Marc Silvestri, and Shadowline is Jim Valentino. The other Image founders copyright their creations in their own names.

Dear Wizard,

I am having difficulty bringing *Wizard* to school. All the teachers say it is inappropriate reading material. I totally disagree. What do you think I should do?

Mark Gialanella
Newtown, CT

Teachers, of course, want you to read great literature like *Tom Sawyer* and *The Scarlet Letter*, but they should also understand that kids want to read what they're interested in. While you should pick up other forms of literature from time to time (you'd be surprised, there's a lot of cool books out there!), there is nothing wrong with reading comics, or with reading *Wizard*. Hey, a lot of kids never pick up anything to read unless they're forced to, so your teacher should be happy you're not wasting your time away playing video games or something. As far as bringing *Wizard* into the classroom, avoid the problem by reading it at lunch or something. Don't let it disrupt class.

Dear Wizard,

Please settle an argument I'm having with my son. He says the first appearance of Azrael in the Batman costume is in

Pen Pals

Want to get in touch with your fellow comic fans? Or want them to touch you? Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to "Pen Pals," c/o Wizard Press, at Magic Words' address on page 22. Hey, make a friend!

Monique McGougan
Age: 26 Sex: F
8/26 Bourke St.
Waterford West
QLD 4133, Australia
Likes: *X-Men*, *WildC.A.T.s*, *Cyberforce*

Lance Gould
Age: 10 Sex: M
21637 Golden Hills Blvd.
Tehachapi, CA 93561
Likes: *X-Men*, *Spawn*, *Turok*

Andrea Main
Age: 13 Sex: M
1454 SE 58th
Portland, OR 97215
Likes: X-Titles, *Excalibur*, *WildC.A.T.s*

Gus Centrone
Age: 13 Sex: M
10503 Orange Grove Dr.
Tampa, FL 33618
Likes: Superman and Batman titles, *Justice League America*

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Ask the WIZARD

Q: What happened to the big "G" on Galactus' chest?
–C. Adelhardt, Manalapan, N.J.

A: *The creators at Marvel thought it looked kinda hokey, and dropped the big G from his chest after his first few appearances.*

Q: What is the highest-priced comic book?
–D. Snell, Bradenton, Fla.

A: Action Comics #*1, the first appearance of Superman. In really high-grade condition, it clocks in at around $70,000-$75,000.*

Q: Can Superman fly without his cape?
–E. Finsness, Kingsland, Ga.

A: *Ma Kent gave Clark the cape just as an added touch to the Superman costume. He doesn't need it to fly.*

Q: Why is Carnage so different from Venom?
–D. Willems, Kansas City, Mo.

A: *The Venom symbiote mutates with every generation, and reflects the host's current state of being. Cletus Kasady, being the psycho he is, causes the Carnage-symbiote to have such a drastically different appearance.*

Q: What exactly is in Spam?
–Y. Chan, Urbana, Ill.

A: *Pork and ham, chicken, water, salt, sugar, sodium phosphates, potassium chloride, ground kitten, sodium ascorbate, and sodium nitrite.*

WIZARD wonders...

...Does the Eternal Warrior get discounts on movie tickets and prescriptions?

Have a question that's bugging the heck out of you and that no one can answer? Heck, the Wizard can answer anything. Just send your stumpers to Ask the Wizard, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001

Showcase '93 #6, a pre-"Knightfall" comic. I think that is Bruce Wayne in the final panel, with an error in the hair color. I say Azrael first appeared in the "Knightfall" series. Who is right???

Bob Effinger
Ridgefield Park, NJ

Your son's right. (This woulda been a cool Comic Watch book.)

Dear Wizard,

All right—I've had enough. I'm a female reader and collector of comics. I bet that put fear into your heart. Well, don't break out the Pepto just yet. I'm writing to defend males against certain females who believe any and all males (writers, artists, mailmen) involved in comics are gross, sexist, narrow-minded, perverted pigs. I'm here in the letters column to open a few loyal females' eyes. Those certain females who seem to have nothing better in their life to do than buy comics, *Wizards*, and other comic magazines, take them home, go through them, and write hate letters about every little perverse, sexist, and revealing article and picture... To you "better females," I reply: Lighten up.

You know as well as I did when I started collecting comics that this is a man's business. It was made for men; this is their playground. If you don't like it, go swim in the kiddie pool. Leave them alone. If you hated it so much, you'd collect dolls.

If you're so sensitive to all these 'sexist' pictures, drawings, articles, and dialogue, then you shouldn't be reading comics. If that stuff really bothers you, I suggest you not go out in public. It's a tough world out there, honey. Learn to live with it.

Another thing I take personally is the fact that many (not all) females complain about female characters being "top heavy and disgusting," drawn only for the pleasure of male readers. Once again, I hope you people never step out of your home and go into public. You might have a heart attack from the horror of it all. I suggest the next time you feel offended, you pick up a pencil and try to draw a woman in spandex. If you don't want your person to look like Robin with lipstick and long hair, you give her a chest—with breasts. Little breasts don't show up, so you have to make them larger. It's not just some males' fantasy. I agree sometimes (more often than not) that it gets out of hand. I think a lot of artists, writers, and editors (many of them female) are considering the female audience and are curbing their drawing. One last thing about this is that any woman's chest is going to look bigger in spandex—look around in public.

Basically—if you want to make a difference—don't write letters over every little thing. I'll agree that things get out of hand. Look at it: you've got a bunch of men together; what do you expect? But lighten up. This is mostly a men's profession. The drawing, writing, coloring, editing, purchasing, and distributing is done mostly by men. If you want to make a difference, go out and try to do one of these. Then you can influence the industry directly. Any woman who gets involved, I applaud! That's terrific!

But don't put down all males in comics (my friends might get very offended) and don't jump down everyone's throat. Make waves from the inside—not the outside.

I don't like being thought of as any of the male references for female (babe, bimbo, et cetera), but next time you call some male a "hunk"—think about who's being sexist.

Now, I don't mean to offend anyone who isn't like this. I just hope most females reading this think about it before they write another nasty hate letter. Go ahead—I can handle it.

Jennifer Wolf
Howard City, MI

Ten bucks says we get lots of mail.

Dear Wizard,

Howdy.

Attila Nagy
Columbus, OH

Attila Nagy...cowboy?

Dear Wizard,

A few days ago, I went down to my local comic shop and I saw something that really caught my eye! What I saw was a *Rai* #0 that was glossy. I asked the store owner why it was glossy, and he said that it was a *Rai* #0 second printing. They were selling for $15. He also said it was worth more than the first printing. What I want to know is, did *Rai* #0 really have a second printing or is this guy making it up?

Jason Leong
Waipaho, HI

According to Jim Perham over at Valiant, the first batch of *Rai* #0s that were run off (25,000-30,000 copies) didn't come out as nice as Valiant wanted them: the inside front cover ad was black

William Sheehi Age: 15 Sex: M 308 Lake View Ave. P.O. Box 215 Mayo, MD 21106 Likes: *WildC.A.T.s, Turok*	Ryan Croke Age: 9 Sex: M 493 South Crow Trail Wheeling, IL 60090 Likes: *X-O Manowar, Eternal Warrior, Venom*	Gary Moore Age: 10 Sex: M 65 Rexford St. Norwich, NY 13815 Likes: *X-Men, Wolverine, Youngblood*	Darsey Lowe Age: 18 Sex: F 410 Lee St. New Brockton, AL 36351-0005 Likes: All X-titles, *Morbius, Spirits of Vengeance*	Robert S. Kibble Age: 31 Sex: M 539 Chard Ct. Grayslake, IL 60030 Likes: *Spectre, Spawn, Wolverine*	Walter E. Gottlieb-Holzman Age: 10 Sex: M 4116 Woodland Park Ave. N. Seattle, WA 98103 Likes: *Amazing Spider-Man, X-Men, Fantastic Four*	Alexander Fadick Age: 16 Sex: M 2917 Homehurst Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15234 Likes: Valiant titles, *Sandman*, X-titles	Kiah Stinson Age: 12 Sex: M P.O. Box 902 Monticello, KY 42633 Likes: Batman titles, *Robin, Youngblood*

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and showed through too much on *Rai* #0's white cover. These copies were put aside and more were printed, and those were the ones that were distributed initially. Those copies sold out, and since retailers were clamoring for more, they went back to press with the original batch and gave the covers a second coat of gloss to make the white front stand out more. These were then shipped out as reorders, not second printings. If there is a discernible difference between the two print runs of *Rai* #0, it is so minor that it's not worth mentioning. As far as price differences go, your letter is the first news we've heard of retailers charging more for the "glossy" issue.

Dear Wizard,

Being an official Wild Agent of Marvel, I have the ability to foretell future events in all comics.

The identity of Star from *Savage Dragon* is Peter Klaptin. For all of you out there saying, "What is this idiot talking about?": In *Savage Dragon II* #2 there was a backup story about the Star in which he fights Inferno. Well, in that fight, Star's hair gets burnt off and Star says, "There goes my trademark hair." And in *SD II* #1, after the Dragon cremates the bar he's in, there is a picture of the TV, on which there is a special report on singer/actor Peter Klaptin's trademark hair being burnt off in a fire.

Agent Drew 03008
Richmond Hill, GA

We asked Erik Larsen, and he's not saying. Given the clues, though, we agree with your theory.

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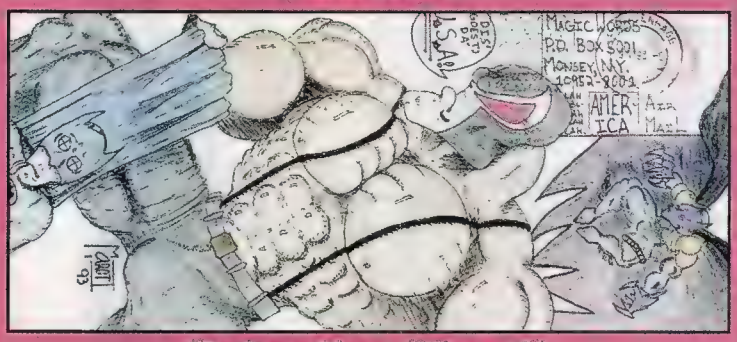
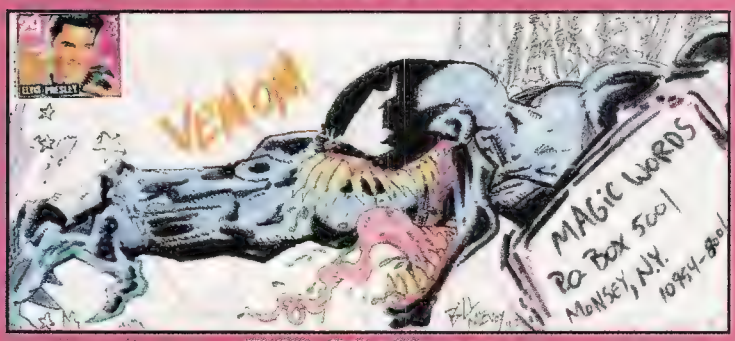
When you drop us a line, show us your drawin' skill! If it's good, we'll print it here, and BOOM, you'll be famous! Just think, as soon as your letter gets printed, you'll become a household name, and you'll start dating the likes of Anne Nicole Smith, or Joey Lawrence (or, if you like, both). Fans who get their letter art printed this month will receive the issue of *Wizard* their letter appeared in, signed by the *Wizard* creative staff; a nifty Wizard "Big Cheese" T-shirt, and a copy of *Deathblow* #1 signed by Jim Lee! The best envelope this month wins all that neat stuff, plus a copy of the Platinum *Superman* #75! (Include a return address on the back of your envelope.)

Brad Reeve
Reno, Nev.



Sebastian Maroti
Delft, Holland

Ronald Winter
Burke, Va.



Bill McEvoy
Palmdale, Calif.

Dear Wizard,

Why's Image's name Image?

Ernie Vanier
Flint, MI

Image: Individually Motivated Artists Generating Excitement. Anybody know what S.H.I.E.L.D. and U.L.T.I.M.A.T.U.M. stand for?

Dear Wizard,

I was watching the beginning credits to Disney's *Robin Hood*. (The cartoon one, not the fake Kevin Costner one.) I saw, in the animation department, Erik Larsen's name. Is this the same Erik Larsen of *Savage Dragon* fame?

John Briseno
Canton, MI

Nope, no relation.

Dear Wizard,

1) Interview some people who are more interesting or at least different.

2) Get some better covers. Since issue #12 (when I started buying *Wizard*), there have been six Marvel covers, six Image covers, one Valiant cover, one Deathmate (Valiant and Image) cover, and one DC cover. No Defiant covers. No Harris covers. No Dark Horse covers.

3) This gatefold cover thing has gotten way out of hand. Sure, for some things, they're a good idea (*WetWorks*, issue #15; Spidey, Venom, and Carnage, issue #18), but for others (*Deathblow*, #25; *The Maxx*, #20), it's just not necessary. Not to mention the fact that a single page cover is enlarged for the poster insert, whereas with the gatefold covers, the size is not changed noticeably, and is occasionally cropped to fit on the poster insert. Which brings me to *Wizard* #23. The triple-gatefold cover idea was ludicrous. Yeah, it was drawn by the incredible Bart Sears (who draws too many *Wizard* covers). Yeah, it was Valiant versus Image. But geez! You guys had to shrink it down so much, it almost wasn't worth putting on my wall (but I did anyways)! You should go back to the single-page covers and make better poster inserts.

4) Why do you only make Image foil cards?

I hope you guys will at least consider what I've written here.

Jeremy Kauffman
Rocklin, CA

1) We have greatly expanded *Wizard*'s coverage. Hope you've noticed.
2) Wait'll you see what we have cookin' for '94.
3) Wait'll you see what we have cookin' for '94.
4) The Image fellas are a good bunch of guys, are really easy to work with, and are very willing to promote their projects. There's also a lot less red tape to deal with when you're working

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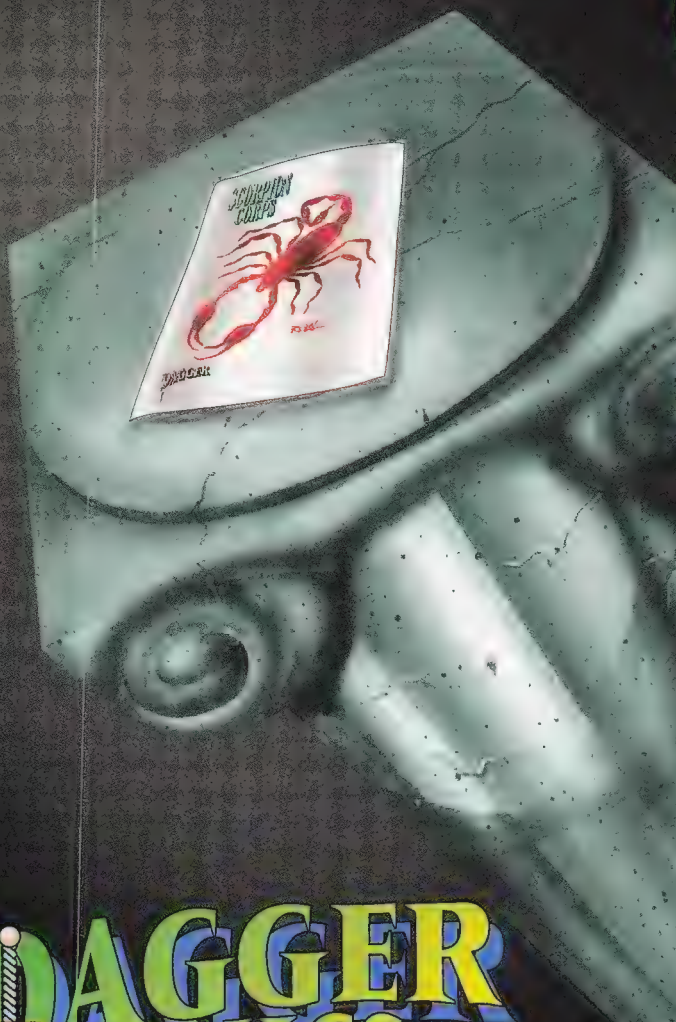

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Dear Wizard,

Wouldn't it be cool if Marvel teamed up the Power Pack, the Six Pack, and the Wild Pack? They could be called "The Wild Six Pack of Power."

Dean "The Keen" Simakis
Cleveland, OH

Don't rile them Power Pack fans, Dean. I just finished settling them down back in *Wizard* #26.

Dear Wizard,

Doom kills Mr. Fantastic! Real or hoax? In a battle to save Latveria from an alien creature brought to Earth by Dr. Doom, Dr. Doom and Mr. Fantastic die. Defeating the alien costs Doom his life, but before dying, he asks Mr. F for his help. Doom: "A final task remains, Richard, one which I...I cannot...must not leave unfinished. And now...when I am so weak... so near death...I find myself forced to rely upon your kindness...your assistance! I cannot leave this mortal coil without bringing our bitter rivalry to its destined conclusion..." –they hold hands– "...by destroying you!!!" In a blinding flash of light, Doom and Mr. Fantastic are reduced to ashes.

After reading the book again, I found out that this might actually be for real. There are two reasons why: 1) A young man by the name of Matt Bib wrote a letter to the Fantastic Forum in this issue. The letter said, "I'm so sick of Dr. Doom. It's always the same old thing with Doom." Marvel's answer to this was, "You won't have to worry about Dr. Doom after this issue any longer. After this issue, the only Doom you'll see in the Marvel Universe is in the 2099 universe (*Doom 2099*) 'cause this Doom is gone. So we'd like to pay a little tribute..." Then there's a portrait of Doctor Doom by Dave Simons.

2) Their preview reads, "Yes, Mr. Fantastic and Dr. Doom are gone. Very gone. Can the surviving members of the FF cope with their loss!? What about the ruined kingdom of Latveria? Who will rule now that Doom is no more!!?!"

Corrie Barnett
Bronx, NY

Actually, given how disappointing the *Fantastic Four* comic book has been for the past several years, and how watered down a villain Dr. Doom had become, who cares?

Dear Wizard,

How does Ghost Rider say words like "stop" and "pull" if he doesn't have lips?

Vance Conkle
Colorado Springs, CO

He doesn't speak, he uses word balloons.

Dear Wizard,

I was wondering whatever happened to treasury-sized editions. I have several, and always thought that they were pretty neat. I have a feeling the cost to produce them would be high and cause cover prices to be exorbitant.

Booh Tosve
Normal, IL

P.S. What the hell ever happened to Rom?

Unusual-sized comics have never really hit it big with collectors, and in today's more serious collecting marketplace, it's doubtful that you'll ever see them again. (And yeah, they would carry a pretty hefty price tag.)

As for Rom, he regained his human form in the last issue of his series, ended the threat of the Dire Wraiths, and then retired, having finished his mission in life and regaining human form. (That comic stunk anyway.)

Dear Wizard,

What are they going to call *Spider-Man 2099* next year, *2100*? I realize that the story takes place in the future, but they still have to follow the rules.

Bernard Hippe
Spokane, WA

No, it's staying with 2099. And what, pray tell, are "the rules"? If you're referring to continuity, get real, buddy. These are comic books.

Dear Wizard,

I nearly broke out in *hives* when I read the Dan Jurgens interview in *Wizard* #27. I immediately *swarmed* to my Superman collection to see if Dan was telling the truth. If Brainiac's probe didn't bring us Doomsday, then what could possibly *bee* the answer? However, I couldn't find the answer in *Superman* #68.

After some *buzzing* around, I finally found the story in *Superman* #69. Oh well, wherever Doomsday came from, I'm sure it will be a *honey* of a tale.

Ray Eden
New York, NY

Two things:

1) Actually, it's *Superman* #67. Sorry for any confusion.

2) That was a very irritating letter.

Dear Wizard,

Iron Man vs. War Machine. Who would win?

Kirk Hart
Dearborn, MI

The X-Men.

Dear Wizard,

If I enter a Wizard contest and win, how long would it take for the prize to reach me?

Jerome K. Deveyra
Los Angeles, CA

Unless we contact you with information that states otherwise, it usually takes about a month or so.

Dear Wizard,

How does Wolverine get his hair like that?

Robb White
Longmeadow, MA

Same way I do. Blow your nose in your hands and then slick back your hair. It dries to a thin crust and keeps your hair perfectly in place.

Dear Wizard,

Do you think that the people who read *Wizard* have a big advantage over the people who don't?

T. J. Ridenour
Scioteville, OH

Well, yeah. How else would you find out about things like Wolverine's hair...and stuff?

Before I split, one quick reminder. If you're writing a letter to a specific department of Wizard Press, make it care of that department. If your writing to, say, Toying Around or Customer Service, address the letter to Toying Around c/o Wizard Press, or Customer Service c/o Wizard Press. Do not lump mail that has to go to a specific *Wizard* department to Magic Words or just to Wizard Press. It won't get to where it has to go unless you send it to the right place.

Also, apologies go out to Steve Brown, who had an envelope printed way back in *Wizard* #17 but was never credited. Sorry, Steve.

I'll be back again next month to alienate more comic fans. Happy Holidays!
—Pat McCallum

Derek Williams
Age: 29 Sex: M
P.O. Box 30264
New York, NY 10011
Likes: *Dr. Strange, Hardware, Vampirella*

Gene Latham
Age: 26 Sex: M
7243 US Hwy. 220 S.
Asheboro, NC 27203-9048
Likes: *What If...?, New Warriors*, Superman titles

Samuel Richards
Age: 16 Sex: M
222 N. Foy Lake Dr.
Kalispell, MT 59901
Likes: X-Men titles, *WildC.A.T.s, Cyberforce*

Aaron Kahler
Age: 12 Sex: M
934 Stark St.
Utica, NY 13502
Likes: *Namor*, all Valiant titles

Kennetha Jones
Age: 14 Sex: F
5356-A Mulberry Dr.
Shaw Air Force Base, SC 29152
Likes: *Death, Silver Sable, Spirits of Vengeance*

Brian Larue
Age: 16 Sex: M
1876 W. Richland Cir.
West Jordan, UT 84084
Likes: *Pitt, Spawn, Maxx*

Steve Dargan
Age: 10 Sex: M
1749 Molly Dr.
Birmingham, AL 35235
Likes: *X-Men, Wolverine*

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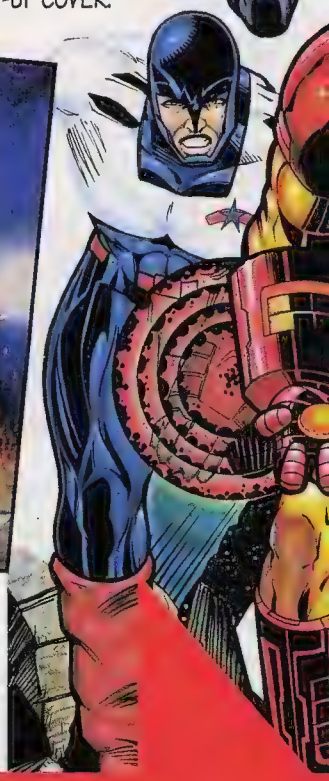

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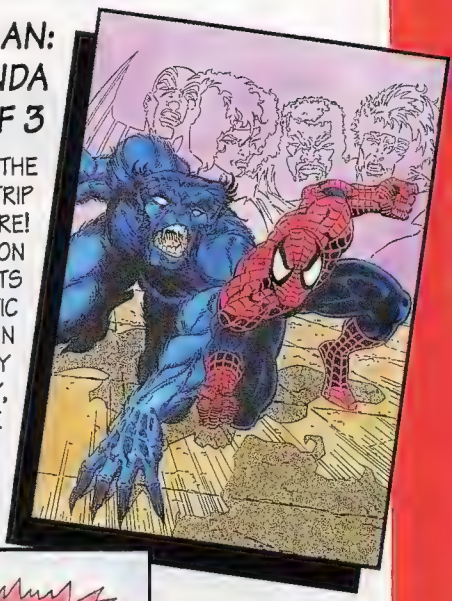

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BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD #1

MTV'S DYSFUNCTIONAL DUO COME TO COMICS! BUTT-HEAD'S BRACES GET CLOGGED WITH CARAMEL CRUD AND ONLY THE WORLD'S MOST SADISTIC DENTIST CAN GET TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM. ALSO, DON'T MISS THE THE POIGNANT PAIR'S CHARACTER REVIEWS OF CLASSIC COMICS SPIDER-MAN, VENOM, THE PUNISHER, AND WOLVERINE! COUNT ON MIKE LACKEY AND RICK PARKER TO CAPTURE THE TRUE SPIRIT OF THE SHOW IN THIS ALL-NEW ONGOING SERIES.

MARVEL COMICS®

Valiant Vision discovered to have horrific side effects. "This is worse than the hair on my palms," says commie.

Poor turnout reported of the first POG convention. "We hear they didn't go over too well in the states," say French delegates.

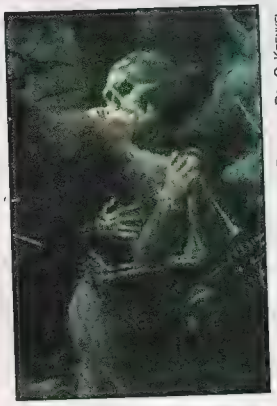
Bruce Wayne reported to be back on his feet, and fat. "I just finished off a Bat-keg," says once-proud Dark Knight Detective.

Wizard News

Since 1990

Wizard #29, January 1994

EC Comics Reunion



TM & © 1993 ESTATE OF ROY G. KRENKEL.

An unpublished painting by late EC artist, Roy G. Krenkel.

Karl Art Publishing has announced that it will publish a comic book in 1994 reuniting legendary EC Comics artists for the first time in 40 years. The book, *Dimension X* Volume 2, will feature a mixture of horror, science fiction, and fantasy in the EC tradition, with stories written by Michael Luck and Karl Art President Barry Kraus.

The artists involved in the book include Al Williamson, John Severin, Al Feldstein (who stopped doing artwork for comics in the 1950s), Jack Kamen, Johnny Craig, Jack Davis, George Evans, and, according to Karl Art, "other very special surprises." All art in the book will be original, never-before-seen compositions. The cover to *Dimension X* Vol. 2 will be an unpublished painting by the late Roy G. Krenkel.

"It is something really special to be working together with these great legends of the comics field," says Kraus. "The EC books were the most beautifully illustrated comics of their time, and still stand out today as groundbreaking. Many of their stories have influenced many famous filmmakers and writers, as well as artists and illustrators."

Kraus, also an illustrator, studied art under the late Harvey Kurtzman, and says that the passing of his mentor has made this project even more important, since new generations need to be "turned on to these comic book greats." (See this month's "Wizard Looks Back" sidebar on page 28 for more about EC Comics.)

In other Karl Art news, the publisher is reviving Captain Action, the popular 1960s action figure. He will appear with a redesigned costume in the 1994 flip-book *Killbrood/Captain Action* #0, which will introduce Killbrood, an all-new character. If fan response is good, Captain Action will be seen again.

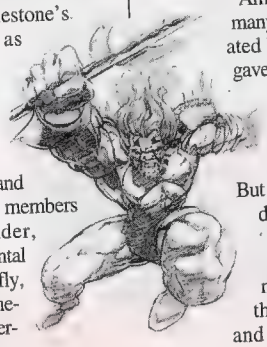
Milestone Ushers in New Titles

Milestone Media is building on its successful first year of publication by releasing three new monthly titles in 1994, along with two mini-series, a magazine, and a line of posters.

The first title, *Shadow Cabinet*, debuts with a #0 issue in December; the title premieres as a monthly in February with a #1 issue. *Shadow Cabinet* unites Milestone's core characters as reserve members of an international team called the Shadow Cabinet. Aside from Hardware, Icon, Static, and Xombi, the team's members include its leader, Dharma, a continental Indian; Iron Butterfly, gifted with ferrokinesis, of Palestinian heritage; Sideshow, an African-American capable of biogenetic polymutation; Donner, of German descent, who is genetically enhanced as a result of her Nazi grandfather's repellent genetic experiments; and Donner's lover, Blitzen, a Japanese-American endowed with hyperkinesis. *Shadow Cabinet* is written by Robert L. Washington and Dwayne McDuffie; John Paul Leon supplies the pencils, Robert Quijano inks it, and Noelle Giddings is handling the painted color.

Xombi, which premiered in a #0 issue in November, will get his own series in the spring. The title character is a Korean-American scientist who can't be killed, the result of his experiments in molecular biology. John Rozum is writing the series, and Milestone Creative Director Denys Cowan is penciling the first six issues. "Xombi is not just another costumed superhero," says Cowan. "The intention is to have much more realistic action and adventure in juxtaposition with supernatural elements."

The third series, *Kobalt*, is due out in April; it's written by Rozum, who'll be working with an undetermined art team. When asked about his origin, the enigmatic Kobalt, a second generation Cuban-American, will tell you many things: an irradiated blood transfusion gave him his powers, or an alien artifact, or a freak electrical storm, or a vat of chemicals. But when it comes right down to it, Kobalt's "power" is based upon a valuable myth which took three years to build and only one week to crumble when his reluctantly acquired sidekick, geeky Richard Page, became involved in a terrible incident.



KOBALT ART TM & © 1993MILESTONE MEDIA

Above: a sketch of Milestone's Kobalt.

"*Kobalt* will serve as something of a 'how-to' guide to the world of superheroing as we watch Page in training," says Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone's editor-in-chief. "Ever wonder how superheroes avoid having disheveled hair? About the realistic lengths a person has to go to to maintain a secret identity? The answers to these questions are the essence of *Kobalt*."

Upcoming Milestone mini-series include Blood Syndicate's *Wise Son*, written and drawn by Ho Che Anderson, and *Holocaust*, written by Ivan Velez Jr. *Milestone For Kids*, a children's magazine, will be released in the spring through Welsh Publishing. A series of posters will also be released in '94, the first one painted by Moebius.

Marvel Motion Against Defiant Denied

On September 30, 1993, the motion filed by Marvel Comics seeking to prevent Defiant from using the title *Warriors of Plasm* was denied by Judge Michael B. Mukasey of the United States District Court in Manhattan, N.Y. Marvel claimed that *Warriors of Plasm* infringed upon a Marvel UK title called *Plasmer*.

Jim Shooter, president and editor-in-chief of Defiant, says, "This is a clear-cut vindication of our position in this case: we knew that we had not infringed upon their title."

Marvel, which still contends that Defiant's use of *Warriors of Plasm* constitutes unfair competition and infringes upon its trademark rights to *Plasmer*, says that

the decision disposes of the last of the preliminary motions in the case and clears the way for a full trial on the merits of its case. The company is deciding whether to appeal the ruling.

Marvel UK Reduces Line by 25 Percent

In response to retailer complaints about disappearing rack space and difficult budgeting problems, Marvel UK is trimming its line of comics by 25 percent, effective October 1993.

"This 'trimming of the fat,' so to speak, should leave us healthier and more profitable," says Paul Neary, editor-in-chief of Marvel UK. "We've grown immensely over the last two years, and along the way, we've accumulated a large roster of genuinely unique characters and truly world-class creators. This cutting back allows us to place our best talent with our strongest characters, and to better focus our advertising and marketing efforts."

Although it sounds like the publisher is canceling several titles, Marvel UK is only planning to rework them for release in 1994. The mini-series being postponed are *Bloodrush*, *Roid Rage*, *Death Duty*, *Warhide*, *Removal Man* vs. *MotorMouth*, *Ripwire*, *Tymestryke*, *Officer Outbody*, *Heavy Weapon*, *G-Force*, and *MotorMouth & Killpower*. The regular series being put on hiatus are *Dark Guard*, *Cyberspace 3000*, *Super Soldiers*, *Black Axe*, and *Wild Thing*.

Dave Gibbons art for the new T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents series.

T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents ® is a registered trademark of John Carbonaro

T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents Return

Next spring, the late Wally Wood's *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* will be relaunched in their own ongoing monthly series by Nemesis Comics. The creative team includes writer/editor George Caragonne and, for the first six issues, artists Paul Gulacy and Terry Austin.

Originally written and drawn by the legendary Wally Wood, *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* was a comic series published by Tower Comics from 1965-69. It focused on the adventures of a superhero team under the command of the United Nations.

"The original fans of *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* won't be disappointed," promises Caragonne. "We're bringing the T. Agents back with a respect—a reverence, really—for the material."

This series will take off where the original series left off, continuing some of the '60s plotlines with a new '90s twist. Caragonne also promises that *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* will feature work by today's hottest artists, and has delivered the goods with the title's first six issues.

Marvel and NFL Launch New Magazine

Starting in January, the superheroes of both the Marvel Universe and the NFL will come together in a new magazine called *Pro Action*. The magazine is a joint venture between Marvel Entertainment and NFL Properties.

Targeted for pre-teens and teens, *Pro Action* will include personality profiles of players and coaches, fashion features, news, notes, and interactive quizzes, games, and puzzles. The highlight of the magazine will be a 16-page custom comic in which superheroes from the Marvel Universe meet NFL stars.

January's Super Bowl Special Edition will have a Troy Aikman cover and profile. Other planned features include a look at the "little people" of the NFL (5'9" and under); strength tips from Junior Seau of the San Diego Chargers; and a question and answer session with Cincinnati Bengals coach David Shula. In the comic, L.A. Raiders linebacker Howie Long will meet the X-Men.

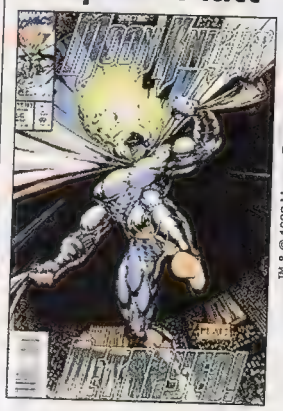
Although the *Pro Action Super Bowl Special Edition* will be released in January, regular publication won't begin until the summer of '94. *Pro Action* is 70 pages and sells for $2.95.

Extreme Sponsors Rams Cheerleaders

Hoping to link the sports card and the comic book card market even more closely, Image's Extreme Studios is sponsoring the Los Angeles Rams Cheerleaders for the 1993-94 season. To celebrate this, Extreme will be releasing a 45-card set containing photographs of each of the cheerleaders.

"We feel it's a good move for the industry. There's always been a strong division between the two respective markets," says Matt Hawkins, Extreme's promotions and marketing director. "Horizontal integration of the two markets will expand the base for both by exposing more people to the products involved."

Introducing... Stephen Platt



The cover to Moon Knight #56 by hot artist, Stephen Platt.

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Moon Knight artist Stephen Platt is making quite a splash in the comic world. Platt, who cites people ranging from Todd McFarlane to George Pérez to Paul Smith to Geof Darrow as his comic influences, is slowly developing his own style.

A student of the fine arts, the 23-year-old Platt always liked to draw superheroes, but dropped comics when he hit adolescence. As a sophomore attending the Ontario College of Art, he picked up his first comic book in a long time and his life changed.

"I was out of the loop for a long time," Platt says, "and I saw this Todd McFarlane issue of *Amazing Spider-Man* [#329]. There was something about his work that I thought was so different and exciting...I saw that issue, and from then on, I was turned on [to comics]." It was then that Platt decided to ply his own talent and become a professional comic book illustrator.

This past January, the Toronto native came to New York City on a school field trip and bumped into a Marvel Comics employee in a bank. Platt showed him his art, and went from there to the Marvel offices, where he was given work by then-Marvel editor Terry Kavanagh.

Kavanagh assigned him a Moon Knight story to draw for *Marvel Comics Presents*, but it went unfinished due to Platt's overwhelming schoolwork. When the school year ended, he was given the chance to draw the monthly *Moon Knight* title. The offer came from editor Sarah Mossoff, who had seen Platt's unfinished Moon Knight story. The artist's comic book career began with *Moon Knight* #55, his first printed work, which is selling at some stores for close to $20.

After his run on *Moon Knight* ends with #60, the title's final issue, Platt will try to breathe new artistic life into *Cable* during 1994. Aside from Cable, the two other Marvel characters he wants to draw are Wolverine and the Punisher. Platt, who is thrilled with the positive response generated by his work, is very humble about his newfound fame. "I'm just happy people like [my work]," says Platt. "I consider myself one of the luckiest people around. I'm really happy to be doing what I'm doing...I love it!"

Colabuono Named Retailer of the Year

Gary Colabuono, owner of Moondog's, a popular chain of comic book and pop culture shops in Chicago, Ill., was named "Retailer of the Year" at this year's San Diego Comic Con. Votes from industry publishers, editors, creators, distributors, and retailers determined the recipient of the award. Colabuono, who opened his first shop in 1978, is noted for the exceptional quality of his stores and his commitment to the community.

But Colabuono isn't just a retailer: he's expanding his hori-

zons with "Moondog's Pop Culture Radio Hour." This magazine-style radio show includes news, reviews, and interviews from the comic book and pop culture worlds. The show, hosted by Kim "Howard" Johnson, is broadcast in the Chicago area by WCBR 92.7 FM from 11 am to noon every Saturday. If you're in the area, check it out!

Dagger Has Arrived

You've seen a plethora of advertisements in various publications. You've heard the hype. But just what exactly is Dagger Comics? Glad you asked.

The story of Dagger, which publishes titles like *Team Anarchy*, *Scorpion Corps*, and *The Mavericks*, has been three years in the making. That's how long it took Dagger's founders to find the necessary financing and set the company's goals and priorities. Dagger founders John Anderson, Frank Griffith, and Ron Jenkins are no strangers to the fluctuations of comics—they've all been retailers since 1976.

Dagger, stationed in Montgomery, Ala., plans to be both reader- and collector-friendly. On the collector side, Dagger has pledged never to issue second printings or print more than 175,000 copies of any one issue. Readers should enjoy the fun and wonder which Dagger intends to put back into comics.

Dagger is also experimenting with other comic-related items. One such item is Comics-SFX, an audio cassette which has dialogue spoken by actors and special effects for fans to listen to as they read a Dagger comic. "We have some new creative and innovative ideas that the industry might not be prepared for, but we're going to bring them to the industry and see how it affects it," says Griffith, the company's chief operating officer.

Dagger's 1994 releases include March's *Chroma*, June's *The Legend*, and October's *The Wylde*.

"We'll probably have at least two more by the end of 1994, and by 1995, we'll have four more titles coming out," Griffith says.

Marvel Endows New Scholarship

Brandon Vietti, a 19-year-old resident of Fresno, Calif., has been selected as the first recipient of the Marvel Comics Scholarship. A group of judges selected Vietti on the basis of artwork he submitted as part of the application process.

The scholarship entitles Vietti to full tuition at the Joe Kubert School of Cartooning and Graphic Art, as well as an apprenticeship at Marvel Comics. The Kubert School is, according to Marvel, "the only fully accredited institution in the world devoted exclusively to the art of cartooning." The school's founder, legendary artist Joe Kubert, was one of the judges on the selection panel.

"There is no better training ground for a career in cartooning than the Kubert School," says Terry Stewart, president of Marvel Entertainment. "We're happy that Marvel is able to play a practical role in helping some of these talented students realize their dreams."

Marvel Entertainment Group Inc. established the Marvel Comics Scholarship at the Kubert School as part of its commitment to nurture new talent in the comic book industry.

WIZARD LOOKS BACK...

AN ENTERTAINING EC COMIC

EC Comics is best remembered today as a publisher of horror comics like *Tales from the Crypt*, but the company's legacy includes far more than comics.

The genesis of EC lies with its founder, Max C. Gaines. Gaines played a critical role in creating the modern comic industry in 1933 when he contracted with Procter & Gamble to use Funnies on Parade as a gift for participants in a coupon redemption promotion. *Funnies on Parade*, generally considered to be the first modern comic book, was successful enough to spawn many other giveaways, and, a few months later, newsstand comics.

In 1938, when Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster were peddling their new character Superman to newspaper syndicates, Gaines got wind of the property and showed it to a fledgling publisher known as DC Comics. The next year, Gaines formed his All-American imprint to produce titles for DC. The characters developed at All-American include the Flash, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Hawkman, and the Justice Society of America.

Gaines left DC in 1945 to start Educational Comics (EC). The EC lineup started with *Picture Stories from the Bible* and *Picture Stories from American History*, which were soon followed by the likes of *Animal Fables* and *Land of the Lost*. Despite Gaines' considerable experience in the field, the early EC books were relatively unsuccessful. He renamed the company Entertainment Comics in 1947, but the publisher continued to produce uninspired comics, and experienced mediocre sales.

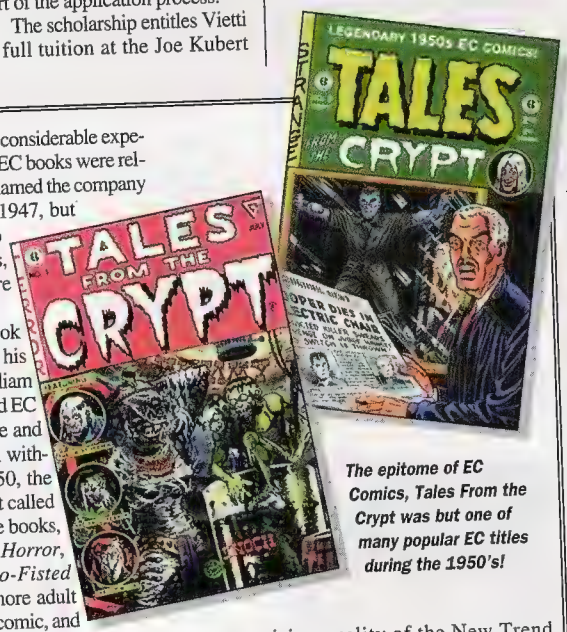
William M. Gaines took over the reins at EC after his father's death in 1947. William revamped the company, and EC was soon publishing crime and western comics, although without much success. In 1950, the company turned to what it called "New Trend" titles. These books, which included *Vault of Horror*, *Weird Science*, and *Two-Fisted Tales*, were aimed at a more adult audience than the typical comic, and featured the finest talent of the day, in creators such as Frank Frazetta, Wally Wood, Harvey Kurtzman, Al Williamson, and countless others.

The last New Trend title began a new genre in comics. Harvey Kurtzman developed *Mad* for EC in 1952. *Mad's* brand of parody and satire was so successful that EC launched a similar comic, *Panic*, in 1954. Further EC expansion was stymied by the introduction of the Comics Code Authority in 1955. Many of the Code's guidelines prohibited violence and mature themes in comics, and it banned the words "horror" and "crime" from comic titles in a move that seemed aimed specifically at the EC line.

Gaines developed a "New Direction" line of titles, which were designed to conform to the Code while still maintaining the uncom promising quality of the New Trend titles. The New Direction line included war titles such as *Valor* and *Piracy*, science fiction and fantasy books like *Impact* and *Incredible Science Fiction*, and unusual and innovative comics such as *M.D.* and *Psychoanalysis*. Even with these more subdued books, EC continued to have difficulties meeting Code standards.

Gaines tried bypassing the Code with his "picto-fiction" magazines in 1955, publications such as *Terror Illustrated* and *Shock Illustrated*, which featured text stories with black and white illustrations. *Mad* also circumvented Code guidelines that year by going to a magazine format with issue #24. Though EC discontinued its comic line in 1956, *Mad* has persevered to the present day as one of the country's premiere humor magazines.

—William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert



The epitome of EC Comics, Tales From the Crypt was but one of many popular EC titles during the 1950's!

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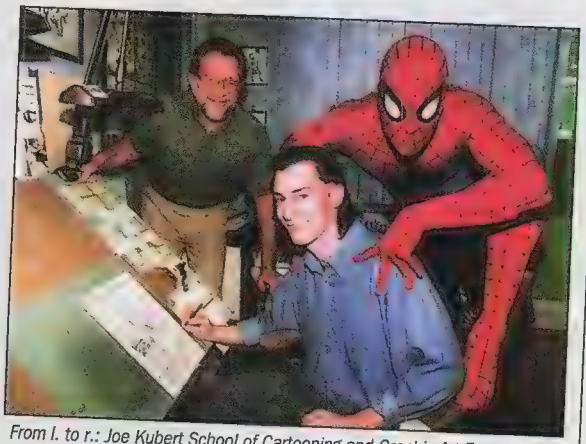
DEATH BEFORE DOWNLOADING
Decipher the Secret Hacker Code Hidden in Each Issue and Logon to The Eden Matrix BBS to Win Valuable Prizes from Adhesive Comics



From l. to r.: Joe Kubert School of Cartooning and Graphic Art Founder and President Joe Kubert, Marvel Comics Scholarship award-winner Brandon Vietti, and Spider-Man.

NightCry Anthology

Cry For Dawn Publications and London Night Studios announced in October that they will be creating a crossover comic book publication entitled *NightCry*.

The scheduled stories include "Mercy Street" by David Quinn and Joseph Linsner; "Dreamstate" by Joseph Monks and Thomas O'Connor; "Killing Thoughts," a Razor story, by Everette Hartsoe; "Evil Ernie: Alien Evil" by Brian Pulido and Leanardo Jimenez; "Heartstopper" by Steve Roman and Louis Small; and a story by Boneyard Press' Hart Fisher.

A February release, NightCry Volume 1 is 64 pages at $4.95.

Jurassic Art Exhibit

Words & Pictures Museum, a comic art museum in Northampton, Mass., will be displaying a "Jurassic Art" exhibit from December 7, 1993, through January 29, 1994. This exhibit features dinosaur art by such artists as William Stout, Mark Schultz, Richard Corben, and Jim Lawson, among others. For more information, call (413) 586-8545.

Maxx Card Snafu

Topps' exclusive Maxx chase card, originally solicited for *Wizard* #28, is packaged with this issue. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Company Updates

Archie Comics

In February, Reggie Mantle returns to wreak havoc on Riverdale in the 48-page *Reggie's Revenge* #1. This special promises to return him to the "un-kinder, un-gentler Reggie of old," so look out! This book is $2 with a pull-out poster insert.

Artifacts Inc.

In February's *P.A.C.* #3, a team member will die! Artifacts ain't saying who, so pick up the book and find out. This issue also features the first-ever use of the Photochrome coloring technique.

Blackball Comics

Dave Elliott and Simon Bisley's *Maximum Force* has joined *Trencher*, *Monster Massacre*, and *Radical Dreamer* on the list of series which Blackball has planned for 1994. Maximum Force originally appeared as a serial in the first two *Monster Massacre* specials, which were published by Atomeka earlier this year.

Boneyard Press

Boneyard publisher Hart D. Fisher's next target is Jim Shooter, in *The Bad Guy: The Rise and Fall of Jim Shudder*. *The Bad Guy* will carry on the tradition of *Kill Image*, *Kill Marvel*, and *Rush Limbaugh Must Die*.

Continüm Comics

Foodang #1 (of 4), written and penciled by Michael Duggan and inked by Peter Cutler, is due next spring. Foodang, once a mild-mannered circus clown, was transformed into an isotopic powerhouse after he became involved an accident with a truck full of radioactive toilets.

Express Publications

Express' Parody Press imprint will release the book we've all been waiting for in January: *Kill Barney* #1 by Don Chin and Bill Maus. In this book, Barney gets "pummeled, stomped, shot, and beaten," so you know it should be loads of fun. The book guest stars Godzilla and Jack Kevorkian.

Fleetway/Quality

In January, the publisher is releasing the very rare *Star Wars Movie Program*, which was originally from the movie presentation in 1977. This extremely limited item, which was kept in excellent condition, is $75.00. Also coming that month is *Argon the Savage* Book One, written and illustrated by Fernando Fernandez, which combines sword and sorcery with science fiction. Book One is 64 black-and-white pages for $7.95.

Image Comics

Those fans who've noticed the name J. Scott Campbell in Homage Studios' credit boxes shouldn't think that he's new to the company. The artist, originally named Jeffrey Scott, just changed his name.

Kitchen Sink Press

Lil' Abner Vol. 18, due in February, reprints the guy's highly publicized wedding, which originally ran in the 1950s. The Kitchen Sink Anniversary Classic Reprint is *People's Comics* from 1972, featuring the death of Fritz the Cat by R. Crumb. *Cherry* #15 parodies *Cadillacs & Dinosaurs*.

In March, Madman #1 goes to a third printing. The Anniversary Classic Reprint is *Death Rattle* #8, the first appearance of *Cadillacs & Dinosaurs*. *Twisted Sisters*, originally published by Penguin Books, features "bad girl" art by today's finest women cartoonists; this leads into all-new material in the form of April's *Twisted Sisters' Comix* #1. The fourth issue of *From Hell*, the Eisner Award-winning series by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, features never-before-seen material as the title's gruesome tale continues.

Mirage Publishing

Turner Entertainment has signed on as the exclusive licensing agent for Stan Sakai's *Space Usagi*, and discussions are under way for a weekly animated TV series, as well as a major toy deal. Details are being kept under wraps, but rest assured that we'll keep you updated on developments.

Now Comics

In January, *Married...With Children: Lotto Fever* #1 debuts. In this zany series, by writer Geoffrey White and artists Tom Richmond and David Mowry, Al wins the lottery and begins a whole new life—but will his new life include his old wife?

Mr. T and the T-Force's direct market edition will come with a trading card beginning with issue #8. The title's price will remain $1.95.

The Neon Knight, a series about a Hispanic mechanic who is also a motorcycle-riding vigilante, is in development for Now. The three-issue *Syphons* series by Alan Curtis and Mark Beachum is tentatively slated for the spring.

Now's Neon Knight (above) and Syphons.

Renaissance Comics

The publisher known as Renegade Comics has effectively changed its name to Renaissance Comics. Renaissance publishes the popular *Raven* title.

Revolutionary Comics

Revolutionary has announced that it will not be publishing Dærick Grössˇ Studio G titles, as was originally announced. The stated reasons were that many Studio G creators were at odds with Revolutionary's terms and conditions, and that Revolutionary itself was dismayed by the lateness of the books' production.

"We'd hoped we could get the schedule back on track, as many of the titles were close to having their orders canceled by distributors," says Herb Shapiro, Revolutionary's publisher, who says that negotiations between the publisher and Studio G took much longer than expected. There is still a possibility that Revolutionary will publish one or more Studio G titles in the future.

Viz Comics

In conjunction with the revival of Ultraman, starting in January, Viz is releasing an *Ultraman Classic* series. The first story will be the six-issue *Battle of the Ultra Brothers*, which is based on the1960s Japanese television series. ☆

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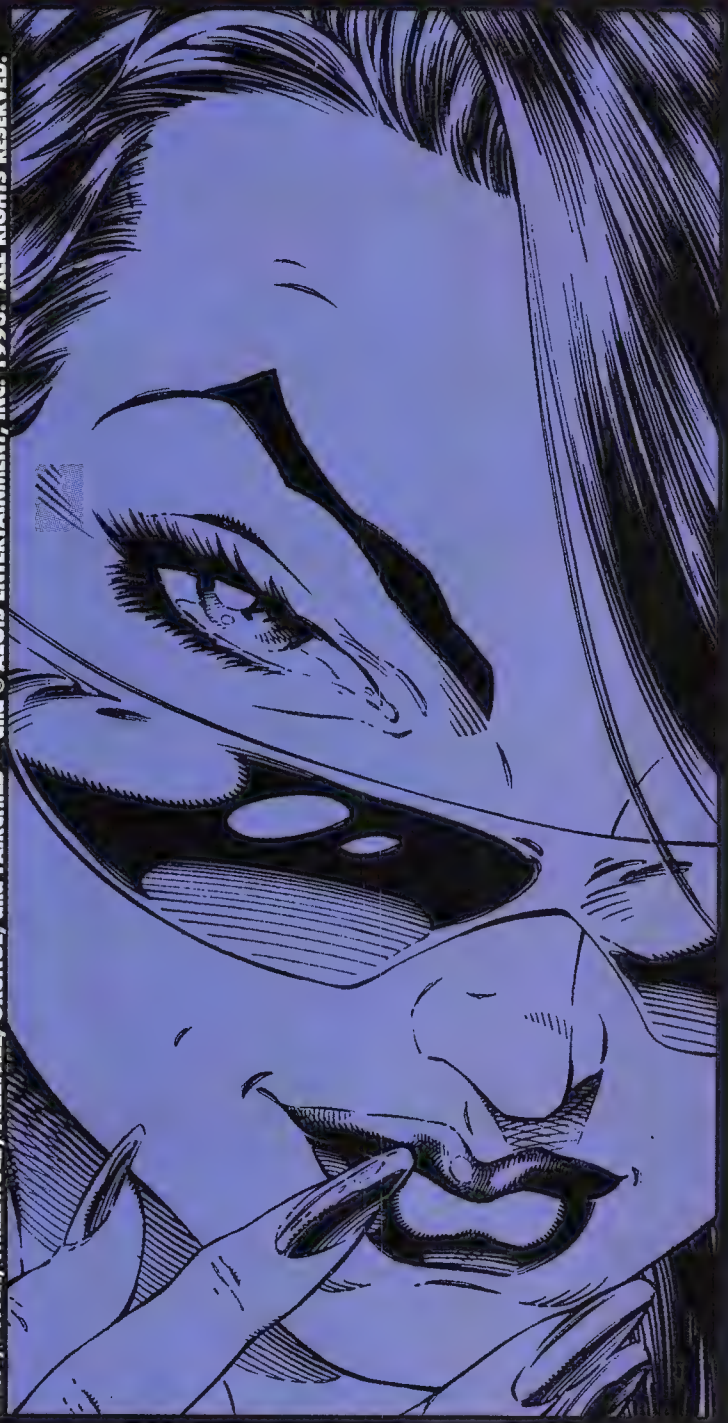

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CYBER FORCE #2•WILDC.A.T.S #7•CYBER FORCE #3

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KILLER INSTINCT!

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SPEAK UP

Every month, *Wizard* sits down a handful of comic fans and asks them questions about the hot topics in today's market. Be it censorship, creator ownership, or the quality of today's comics, the most important part of the comic industry, the fans, speak their minds. This month, *Wizard* speaks to 26-year-old Chad Barringer, 29-year-old David Butler, 23-year-old Steve Haase, and 19-year-old Earl Walker. *Wizard* is represented by William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert.

YEAR OF GROWTH

Much has been made of the changes the comic market has gone through this past year. Several publishers entered the field with a multiplicity of superhero offerings, a variety of enhanced covers, and a barrage of marketing strategies previously unheard of in the comics industry. Publishers, retailers, even comic book characters themselves were all forced to adjust in this year of growth. How have comic consumers reacted to this year's flurry of activity? Speak Up! takes a look at the high points and low points of '93 from the viewpoint that matters most.

Wizard: Let's start with how you feel about some of the companies that have come along in the past year. What companies have really struck you as being dynamite in the past year?

Steve: I'm pretty faithful to DC, actually. I don't stray too much. I have followed a few of the original Image titles, but outside of that, I haven't seen much.

Wizard: The new publishers haven't done much for you?

Steve: No. I'm on a budget, so I stick with what I know is really good, and haven't tried out any of the new companies much.

Dave: I would say Steve's not missing much. The only new one I can think of is Defiant. *Warriors of Plasm* was really good. I felt it was well done.

Chad: I agree with Steve. I haven't seen anything out there that piques my interest as far as new companies are concerned.

Earl: As a new collector, I haven't yet learned what I should and should not spend my money on. I've bought a couple of Milestone books. They have pretty good art and a pretty good storyline, but basically, it is a copy of everything that is already going on in Marvel and DC books. I have gotten some Ultraverse. They have some good art and pretty decent storylines and they seem to be coming out with original heroes, but I think it is kind of a feeble attempt, because with all the stuff out there, everybody is going to stay with what they know: X-Men, Batman, Superman, and so on.

Wizard: What do you guys think about a lot of the changes we have seen in the past year, with Bruce Wayne getting his back broken, Superman dying and coming back, Reed Richards of the Fantastic Four dying, and so on?

Steve: I thought the Batman storyline was a pleasant change. I thought it was about time that something really big happened, and it was really well written. I'm a Batman fan [though]...I probably would have liked anything.
I have never been a Superman follower until this whole media blitz, but I managed to catch onto the storyline after reading "The Death of Superman" and issues since then. It is a very good story, too, I think. I will probably end up dropping Superman and still following Batman just because he is a character that I like more.

Dave: I'm sort of the opposite of that. I liked Superman for a while, but then stopped reading it. I picked it up again with the death issues, and it was a good story. I thought it worked really well. The Batman stuff I didn't follow at first. I started to pick it up right at the end just to see if it was interesting at all, and it sort of was.

Wizard: Chad, you have been a long-time Superman and Batman fan.

Chad: Actually, Batman burned me. I burned out on it a few years ago when I had all kinds of time, and then I got married, so I had to cut back. Batman was one of my cuts, but I just picked it up recently with the latter part of "Knightfall," which was actually some of the best Batman stuff I have read in a while. The Superman issues I really enjoyed, too. They weren't the typical "Oh, he dies, he comes back" Marvel swill.
You were talking earlier about Reed Richards, and Marvel has to do a lot to prove to people that this isn't just another "He's dead, he's back!" gimmick—no explanation, no real consequences, everybody will go on as is. DC really went in-depth as to how the death of Superman affected people—not just the supporting cast, but the entire DC universe. It gave a more human side to everything. [Superman's] dealing with Lois and his parents was really well done.

Earl: I'll start with the death of Superman. That was a really good storyline. The only thing I wish they would have done was show a little bit more of the origin of Doomsday, because you are just thinking, "Where did he come from?" He comes up [from underground] busting everything, beats on the Justice League, Superman comes and beats on him, Superman says, "I'm not going to take

this anymore," and Superman dies. But the storyline was more than that. It was good that Superman showed his mortality...I thought it was a pretty good storyline with the four Supermen, because everybody was [saying] "Okay—one of them is the real thing. Which one is it?" I don't think anybody was expecting the original Superman to come back, and I have to give DC credit, because I didn't expect him to come back either. I was thinking it was probably the kid that was Superman. I just wish we could find out more about Doomsday.

Wizard: We will. Doomsday has a rematch with Superman in a mini-series coming out in early 1994.

Earl: That will really be a big seller for DC. Let me move on to Batman. "Knightfall" was a great storyline. I wish they didn't have to break my boy's back like that!

Chad: Going back to the Superman stuff, I liked the fact that they used Hank Henshaw as the Cyborg because the two issues of Superman that they used Henshaw in were basically Dan Jurgens saying, "Let's do the Fantastic Four, but let's do it more realistic this time." Because when people are exposed to radiation they are not going to come out wonderful and happy.

Steve: Not having been a Superman fan, I guess I didn't appreciate it as much as I might have. I followed Batman for years, and saw it go a little bit stale. Then when they started leading up to "Knightfall," I just knew something was coming without even reading any of the hype on it, because he was just getting more and more burned out and you knew that something big was going to happen. I didn't get that anticipation with Superman. The first issue I picked up was when Doomsday busted out, and I didn't have the background for trying to guess who was what.

Wizard: What do you guys think about the saturation of gimmicks, enhancements, deluxe versions, hardcovers, et cetera that we have seen in the past year?

Steve: I hate that stuff. If it was Batman, I wouldn't buy it. That is what it boils down to. Batman is a character I like, one that I have been following. I am trying to keep my Batman collection [comprehensive]. As far as the other things go, the Robin thing really infuriated me with the different covers and the packaging and the motion covers that didn't really work right. I got really sick of spending money for those kind of gimmicks when I didn't think the storyline backed it up.

Dave: I don't like gimmicks unless they add to the story somehow, and there is no way that any of them could. A good story is going to sell itself, and the more noise you put on the front, the more you are trying to hide what's on the inside. The Superman stuff—all the DC stuff—is nice. They come out with two different versions. They at least give you the choice. You can buy the regular version at regular cover price, or if you want something special to go with the book, you can have it. It may be $1 or $.50 more, but you have a choice.

Steve: Cutting out six different coupons is ridiculous. And all the issue #0s that come out—those just seem like more gimmicks to me. I think they should work them into the regular storyline or something.

Chad: I'm not a big fan of that stuff, either. I got most of it early on with the multiple *X-Men* #1 covers and so on, but [now] I agree with Dave. There has to be something inside to buy it. You can have pop-up covers, you can have hologram covers, you can have chromium pop-up hologram covers, but if the inside is still junk, it is junk.

As a new collector, I haven't yet learned what I should and should not spend my money on.

Earl: Actually, I think that some of the chromium covers look good. Bloodshot's chromium cover looked good, Turok's chromium cover looked good, and the *Superman* #82 chromium cover looks good. Everybody is going chromium-wild and hologram-crazy. I do like the X-Men holograms, the ones on the "Fatal Attraction" books, and they don't put a hologram on every issue. The ones in the series where something really, really big happens—then I could see why you would want to put a little extra feature on there. Plus, it is a thicker book and you are getting a good story.

Chad: I think DC has got the right idea on the hardcovers and Prestige Format books. The Sandman stuff deserves to be in hardcover. I also really enjoy the stuff they are doing with the DC Archives. I would love to have those books in my collection, but since there is no way right now I can afford to have those back issues, having them in the Archive editions is fantastic, because they will last longer than the original issues and you can display them.

Wizard: The amount of product for the year doubled, so that means most people had to alter their buying habits. What were your biggest changes?

Steve: Well, I've dropped everything that Marvel puts out, except for an occasional mini-series, like the Frank Miller *Daredevil: Man Without Fear* mini-series that is currently going on. I've made sure to add all of the Vertigo stuff, except for a couple of the comics which I find a little too eccentric for me. *Doom Patrol* and *Kid Eternity*, I dropped. If I can't understand the storyline, what is the point? Those two are just too bizarre. I've picked up a lot of the DC comics that were not originally under Vertigo, that I had never read before, but were incorporated with Vertigo. *Swamp Thing*, *Hellblazer*—they're just dynamite. I really enjoy those titles. I'm glad they caught my attention with the new Vertigo imprint, and I'm enjoying most of the line.

Dave: I dropped some of the Vertigo things because I don't have time to keep up on all of them. I'm sticking with the core books—*Sandman*, *Shade*, and *Hellblazer*. I decided I couldn't continue to buy all the Valiant stuff that came out. It is consistently well-written and everything, but the art to me almost across the board leaves something to be desired. I love the writing, but continuity between titles doesn't do much for me, so I've cut those. It simply isn't possible for me to buy and read 18 books from the same company.

Chad: I pretty much got out of independents, with the exception of the occasional Indiana Jones book from

Dark Horse, *John Byrne's Next Men*, and *Spawn*. The Valiant stuff I did buy quite heavily, but it does leave a little bit to be desired artistically. I just decided to concentrate on more stuff from DC. I picked up the new *Hawkman* series, and I haven't been disappointed by it.

Wizard: Taking into account what has happened in the past year, with all of these different changes in the industry, what do you think we are going to see in the next year? Will Marvel still be the top dog, with DC No. 2? Or maybe we'll see Image up there? What is your forecast of what we will be talking about this time next year?

Steve: I have always been a DC fan—Superman and Batman and Vertigo. I flip though a lot of Marvel's new titles—they have an incredible [number] of titles—but none of them interest me as much as the Vertigo line from DC. I'm pretty faithful to that, and I'm trying to keep up with all of their titles. I would like to see more on the Vertigo line.

Dave: I think DC has got its niche pretty well secured. They seem to be more consistent. I don't think they will ever be hurting for market position. Marvel is just banking on the fact that there are so many people that will buy whatever they put out. I don't understand the appeal of Image. Maybe I'm just too old to appreciate it, but I just don't go for hot artist stuff, so I have never yet figured out why people have to have Image books. Especially since I like to be able to read something monthly. It is amazing that people just put up with that schedule they have.

Earl: I think DC has really set itself up to get some profit, because people are really going to want to know what is going on with Doomsday. Also, I think that Bruce Wayne is going to rehabilitate himself and he is going to come back and say, "Yo, Azrael, I'm back. Thanks for taking care of my city," and Azrael is going to say, "No, you aren't ready for this. You are going to have to come through me." And Bruce Wayne is going to say, "All right, let's go." Right there, people will be saying, "I have to have five of these!"

Wizard: So you think DC is going to be top dog? They're going to beat out Marvel?

Earl: I don't know. Marvel has some explaining to do as well, such as, how did Magneto pull the adamantium out of Wolverine? Why didn't he do it a long time ago if he had the power? That is something that I don't really like, but it was a good story. I don't like the fact that Wolverine got his adamantium pulled out, because he has been through so much already. How are they going to get him his claws back? Wolverine is not Wolverine without his claws. If they don't come up with a good storyline, people are going to say, "Let's see what is going on with Batman and Azrael this week!"

Wizard: Okay, let's find out about your biggest gripes of 1993. What did you read and feel "Oh, you've got to be kidding me!" about this year?

I got really sick of spending money for those kind of gimmicks when I didn't think the storyline backed it up.

Steve: One thing I'm really sick of is superhero teams. I was pretty disappointed by several of them this year. It seems like every comic now is a collection of four to five superheroes who each have a super power, and it kind of gets old after a while. Another big disappointment for me—just because it seemed like a neat storyline but there wasn't enough of it per comic—was *Deathblow*. You waited forever for issue #2 to come out, and you only got eight more pages to add to your first eight. That was a big disappointment for me, especially for the price of a comic.

Earl: This is tough. The only thing that is kind of dried out is the Infinity stuff. *Infinity Gauntlet* was good. *Infinity War* was a letdown. I didn't even get started with *Infinity Crusade*.

Dave: *Batman* #500 was kind of a disappointment for me. To be fair, I hadn't read any of the previous issues. It seemed to be so obviously throwing in this to appease these people and throwing in this little story because it would make Azrael fans crazy. It seemed to be somewhat calculated and not enough of an actual "story."

Chad: The Youngblood stuff that came out after the first mini-series was a disappointment. It did start fairly well, but it died, and I don't think the story is worth the paper it is printed on. The only consistent book that Image puts out with a great storyline is *Spawn*.

Steve: I guess I tend to buy things that I know won't disappoint me. I stick to creators that I know are going to deliver consistently.

Wizard: What was the best read of 1993? What book or storyline do you think really stood out?

Chad: It has to be the Superman titles, bar none. As an aside, *Speeding Bullets* was also awesome.

Earl: All I have to say is "Knightfall" and "Fatal Attractions" X-story. Those storylines were wonderful.

Steve: I'll go with something off-the-wall. I always have been a Batman fan. I've really enjoyed the Superman line, too, but one of the surprises that I thought was a really good read—and I'm still anticipating the books because it only comes out every two months—is *PropellerMan* from Dark Horse. I was really amazed with it. Everything is painted. It is a beautiful book and it has a very intriguing storyline. Even though it only comes out six times a year, I really look forward to those books.

Dave: Superman is the main hero thing I read, so that was pretty much keeping me going. It is great that it comes out weekly. But maybe the book that I was anticipating the most and was not disappointed by was *Eightball* #10. It wrapped up the ten-part "Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron" storyline. When I got the final part of it, I went back and read all of them together. The punch was there. It totally delivered.

Wizard: So it sounds like Superman and Batman have been the big winners in '93, despite some rough competition. It would also appear that publishers should consider taking a "back to basics" approach in 1994. In fact, many publishers have already indicated that they'll be emphasizing timeliness and downplaying gimmicks next year. 1993 will be a tough year to top, but you can bet that with publishers trying to duplicate the success of Superman and Batman, '94 should manage to be even more exciting. ☆

Being First

I was going to start this editorial with some talk about beginnings and endings, and about the two-faced Roman god Janus (the fella January is named after), and about looking forward as well as back, blah, blah, blah...

And then I realized that every editorial writer in the country is probably preparing a piece like that right now.

So what can I write about in an editorial for the first issue of the new year, and for Wizard's first-ever annual year-in-review issue?

How about "firsts"?

Firsts are very important in human history—the first European to reach the Western Hemisphere (the Irish and the Danes are still arguing about that one), the first modern republic (ours), the first black man to serve in the Senate, the first woman likewise, the first man in space, the first man on the moon. You get the idea.

Firsts are real important in comics, as well; the first comic strip (generally agreed to be Hogan's Alley, starring the Yellow Kid, in 1896); the first comic book (Funnies on Parade #1, 1933), the first superhero (guess who?), the first book of the Silver Age (we're still arguing over whether that's the Martian Manhunter's first appearance or Barry Allen's).

Why is it so damned important to be first? After all, it probably means you're not going to be the best; everyone who follows you will be able to build on your foundation and avoid your mistakes. And it means you might well be forgotten, because there might be so many like you that your uniqueness eventually fades.

But if you're first, you usually get bragging rights, I suppose: "I thought of that before anyone else did!" And that's easier to defend than "best." Who was the best president of the United States? Your answer will probably depend on a number of things, not the least of which will be your age and political persuasion. But when you're asked to identify the first president, the answer is indisputable—George Washington.

And being first means you don't have to watch your back all the time. Nobody was out to make their reputation by killing "the first fast draw in the West"; they were after "the fastest draw."

Still, given a choice, I'd rather be best than be first. Best means I can point to everything I do with pride, not just my original accomplishment. Being the first extraterrestrial member of the Senate won't mean much if our ET legislator never sponsors a meaningful law, will it? But being the best senator means that (hopefully) my colleagues look to me for leadership and advice.

"Uh oh, the old fart's rambling again," I can hear you all thinking. "What's his point? Maybe I should turn to the Picks from the Wizard's Hat while there's still time."

Okay, you may be right. Let's get this back to comics.

In recent years, first issues have been the collector's item of choice, and many older titles with long histories have seen their popularity wane as their issue numbers reach 100, 200, and even 700 (Action Comics will be there in a few months). But think about this: Something must have made these comparatively ancient titles popular enough to last this long. Are you passing up Stupendous #337, with its long publishing history, in favor of the first issue of some title that will never hit #12? Maybe you owe it to yourself to look into those older titles, not just the Superman and Batman books that are currently reaping the benefits of major "events."

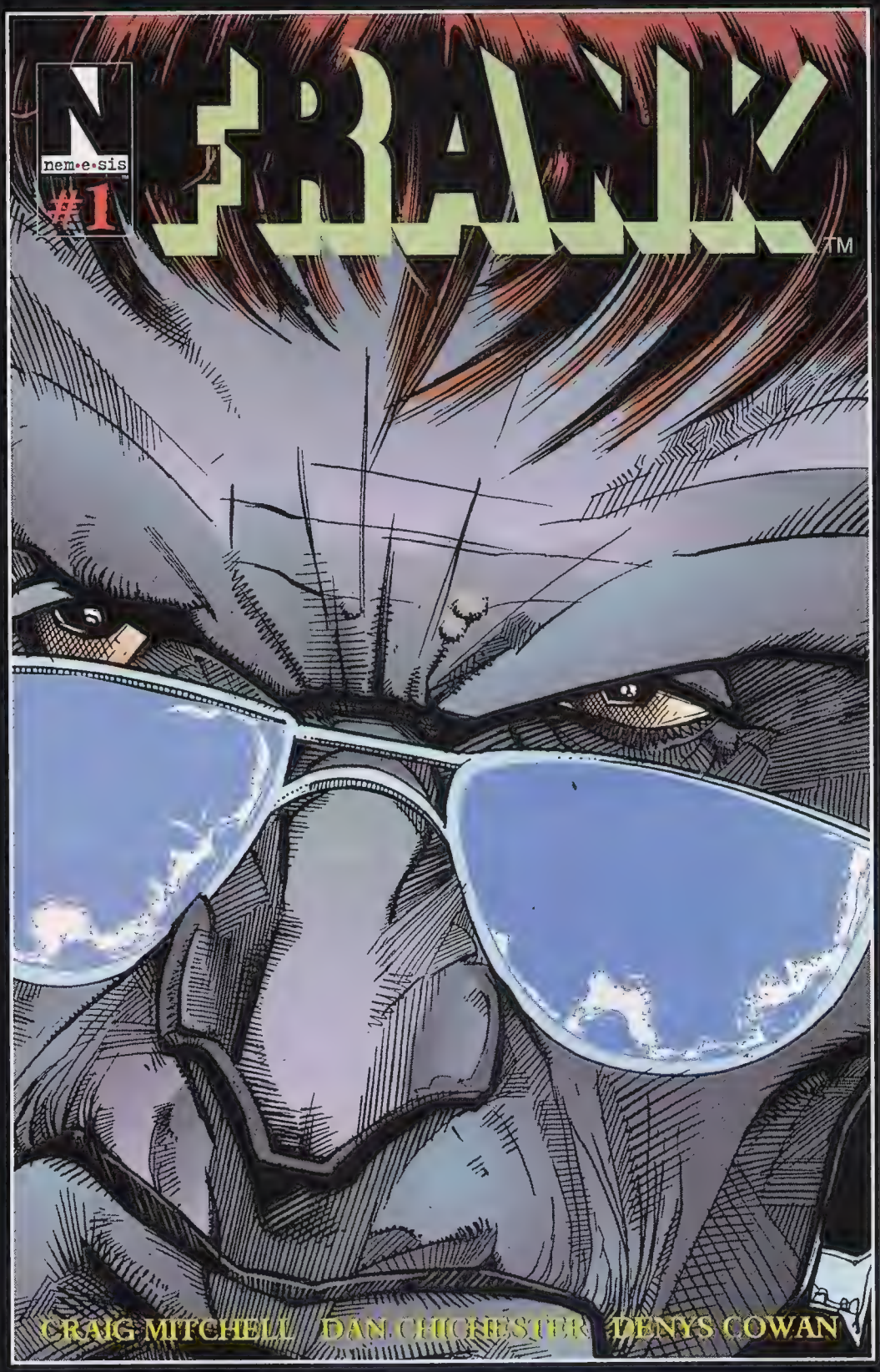
Have you looked at Thor recently? How about Fantastic Four or Iron Man? A little lower down the number scale, what about Swamp Thing or New Titans? Or even, heaven forfend, some humor books like the Archies, most of which have very high issue numbers?

I know collectors who have a standing order at their retailer: "Give me every #1 that comes out." How about going the other route: "Make sure I get every title with an issue number higher than 100!"

Pat O'Neill

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

THE ED.



1 of a 4-PART SERIES - DECEMBER '93

Suggested for mature readers

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Looking Ahead

What 1994 holds for the comic book fan.

By Brian Cunningham

Continuity Comics

The "Rise of Magic" crossover which began in '93 will be featured in Continuity's January releases. The company will wrap up the storyline in February with a mammoth 48-page graphic novel.

February marks the beginning of an eight-issue *Megalith* storyline called "Rise of the God King"; it's outlined and plotted by Jim Shooter, and illustrated by Keith Pollard and Romeo Tanghal. This project revolves around Continuity's established underworld realm, in which the gods and goddesses of ancient cultures continue to survive beneath the Earth. The superhero, Megalith, finds himself the object of affection of one of these goddesses. The only problem is that she happens to be married, and her husband is *very* unhappy about this development.

Continuity will also launch a new imprint, Curious, in February. Curious is described as "not superhero comics...but superheroes aren't excluded," and will showcase alternative concepts. The first book from the imprint is the four-issue *The Damned City* by Ricardo Barriero and Juan Gimenez. In this story, an ex-prostitute and an ordinary guy find themselves in a violent city where survival is the name of the game.

Neal Adams, along with artist Ernestor Infante, will handle a special project starring the character called Knighthawk, who first appeared in *Valeria, the She-Bat* #5. Adams calls him "Continuity's Batman," and says that Knighthawk and Valeria will be Continuity's secondary focus in "Intergalactic War."

1994 will also bring a mini-series starring Samuree. This series will feature a new twist on vampires: in Japan, posits the story, there exists a different race of vampires that were infected with vampirism when bitten by a special breed of dragon. Instead of turning into vampire bats, these vampires turn into large komodo dragons!

Dark Horse Comics

Dark Horse's January schedule begins with Eddie Campbell's *Dance of Lifey Death*. Written and drawn by Campbell, this black-and-white one-shot answers the question, "If there's a personification of Death [i.e., the Grim Reaper], then shouldn't there be a personification of Life?"

Continuity's answer to Batman, Knighthawk (above left).
Watch for the twisted vampire story starring Samuree (above right).

Knighthawk and Samuree ™ & © Continuity Comics.

Also coming that month is *RoboCop: Roulette*, a four-issue mini-series written by Steven Grant which continues the adventures of Detroit's super-cop. There's also the four-issue *Aliens: Music of the Spears* mini-series, written by Edward Martin III, which deals with a guy who crafts music by "sampling" death cries of people and animals; he tries to record an Alien's death cry.

February 1 brings *X* #1, which continues the adventures of Comics' Greatest World's most popular character. This series, by Steven Grant, Doug Mahnke, and Jimmy Palmiotti, takes off right after X's adventures in *Dark Horse Comics* and CGW. We find X feared by everyone, and haunted by the deaths he's caused. The ongoing *Catalyst* series, written by Eddie Campbell and Peter Ford and drawn by Tim Hamilton, also starts in February. This series continues the adventures of Golden City's super-team in the aftermath of the city's secession from the union.

John Byrne's *Danger Unlimited* is another scheduled February release. It takes two teams—one from the past and one from a horrific future—and combines their adventures into one book. This book returns writer/artist Byrne to his "cosmic" roots in *Fantastic Four* and *Superman*, as opposed to his realistic storytelling in *John Byrne's Next Men*. *Danger Unlimited* also has a back-up story starring the team member called the Torch of Liberty, whom Byrne calls his version of Captain America. Written by Byrne and drawn by Kieron Dwyer, this tale is set in World War II.

Other new February projects include *Atlas* #1, which reprints classic Atlas Comics offerings; *Hellhounds*, an all-new manga series in the form of a futuristic cop drama; a new *Indiana Jones* mini-series; *Rack and Pain*; and *Nina Paley's New One-Shot*, with more off-the-wall antics from cartoonist Nina Paley.

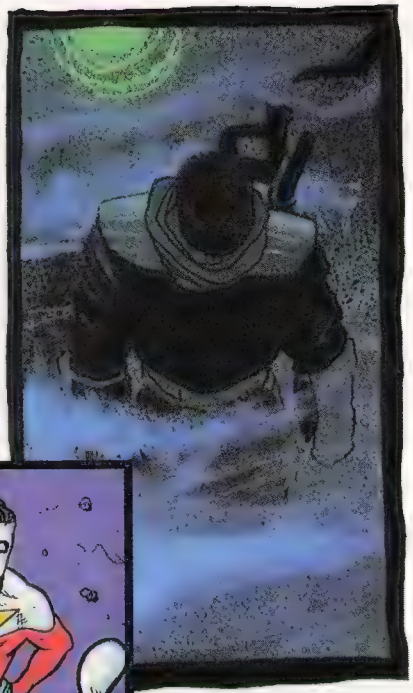
The second *Grendel Tales* mini-series premieres in March; it's called *Grendel Tales: The Devil's Hammer*, and is by writer/artist Rob Walton. According to Grendel creator Matt Wagner, *The Devil's Hammer* is about "an unmitigated attack of Grendels on an exiled Christian outpost." Wagner himself will be writing and painting a back-up Grendel-Prime story called "Imitation of Life."

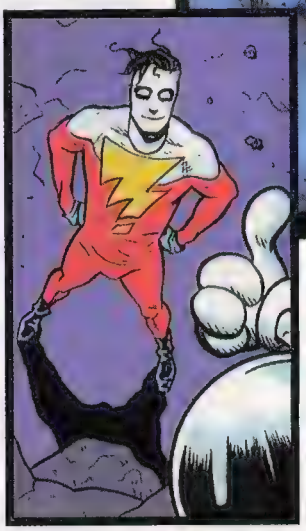
Two other titles will return in March: the critically acclaimed *Two-Fisted Tales*, which will sport an all-new format, and, from Comics' Greatest World, *Motorhead Special*, by John Arcudi and newcomer Dan Norton.

Mike Mignola's *Hellboy* will be released under the Legend imprint in March, and Mignola is pulling out all the stops in this Byrne-scripted four-issue mini-series. The World's Greatest Paranormal Investigator stars in a story inspired by H.P. Lovecraft; it not only reveals parts of his origin, but also has him investigating an arctic expedition with deadly vampire frog people. *Hellboy* also has a "Monkeyman and O'Brien" back-up story by Arthur Adams.

March also brings *John Byrne's Next Men: Power*, the title's second story arc in mini-series format. Byrne says this storyline takes the subplot of *JBNM: Faith*, i.e., Dollar Comic characters coming to life, and pushes it to the forefront. "It [explores] various incarnations of the word 'power' and what that means," says Byrne. In *JBNM*'s next story arc, *Lies*, the Next Men discover that nothing they thought was real...was real.

March also tentatively heralds the return of Michael Allred's Madman in *Madman Comics*. Allred says that, among other shocks and surprises, this series will introduce characters like Rex Raygun, Kelly (who will be competing with Joe for Madman's affections), a mysterious character who will be responsible for the death of Madman (?), and the X-Bots: Astroman, Mr. Robot, and Mechanical Man.





X (below) gets his own monthly title, *Grendel Tales* (above) begins a second chapter, and Mike Allred's *Madman Comics* (left) bolsters the Dark Horse lineup.

April is also the scheduled release date for a one-shot, *Predator: Invaders from the Fourth Dimension*. It's a campy story that takes place in 1950s America, in which 3-D glasses at a drive-in allow people to see Predators. On the serious side of things, look for *Medal of Honor*, an anthology series which depicts the true stories of medal of honor recipients.

Frank Miller and Geof Darrow's *The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot* is tentatively scheduled for April. Done as a "fun" book and geared to readers of all ages, the story is about an armored U.S. military agent who receives a "boy robot" as a gift from the Japanese government.

May starts off with a new anthology title called *Dark Horse Down Under*, which features stories by today's hottest creators from Australia and New Zealand. Also coming that month is *Star Wars: 'Droids*, a new mini-series focusing on the misadventures of C-3PO and R2-D2.

Paul Chadwick's *Concrete: Killer Smile* mini-series, in which Larry is

X™ & © Dark Horse Comics, Inc. Madman™ & © Michael D. Allred. Grendel™ & © Matt Wagner.

dragged along on a crime spree in Englewood, Calif., is expected in June. Chadwick says, "All he [Larry] has to do is keep from getting killed until Concrete can catch up with him." Chadwick also says that his six- to eight-issue *Concrete: Think Like a Mountain* mini-series, which was supposed to be released at about this time (and was reported on in Wizard News, *Wizard* #26), will be postponed indefinitely.

Other series planned for 1994 include James O'Barr's *Gothik*; a *Shadow Movie Special*; a *Monkeyman and O'Brien* mini-series by Art Adams; a *Titan Special* by Eddie Campbell and Peter Ford, with art by Chris Sprouse and a cover by Bart Sears; a new *Badger* mini-series by Mike Baron and Jill Thompson; Frank Miller and Dave Gibbons' sequel to *Give Me Liberty*, *Martha Washington Goes to War*; a second *Classic Star Wars* series; a *Tarzan vs. Predator* mini-series in the fall; a new *Nexus* series by Baron and Steve Rude, tentatively scheduled for October; and *Star Wars: Dark Lords of the Sith*, which contains the history of the Dark Lords.

DC Comics

DC continues its big push for Green Lantern in January, part of an effort to generate the same excitement which surrounded Superman and Batman books in '93. "Emerald Twilight," the storyline which began in *Green Lantern* #48 and #49, concludes in #50, which ships in January. #50, by Ron Marz and Darryl Banks, contains Jordan's final battle with Sinestro, who has been revived by the Guardians of the Universe to stop the renegade Green Lantern. The conclusion will shock you—Jordan drains the entire power battery on Oa, killing all of the GLC, and then goes off into space seeking still more power in his quest to resurrect the obliterated Coast City.

The weakened Guardians then seek out a new person to become Green Lantern. They find Kyle Rayner of Earth, the first person they see. Unlike the average Green Lantern, Rayner is neither fearless nor completely honest—nor does he have a 24-hour recharge limit or a yellow impurity. He is a freelance artist in some trouble, and it will be interesting to see how this flawed Green Lantern reacts to being handed one of the single greatest weapons in the universe.

And speaking of flawed Green Lanterns, Guy Gardner will have to adjust to there being only one Green Lantern, since he needs GL's power ring to recharge his own yellow ring. The new team of Beau Smith, Mitch Byrd, and Dan Day debuts in *Guy Gardner, Warrior* #20, in which we'll see the genesis of Guy's new look, new powers, and, yes, new haircut.

Will readers see Hal Jordan again? While *Green Lantern* #50 is his last appearance in the title for the foreseeable future, a very powerful Jordan will play a prominent role in *Zero Hour*, the upcoming crossover event, as well as in future issues of *L.E.G.I.O.N. '94*.

While Superman and Lois Lane aren't getting hitched in the foreseeable future, expect the excitement generated by the Super-titles in '93 to carry over into '94.

The three-issue *Doomsday* mini-series, by writer/artist Dan Jurgens, kicks off in February. In this series, we learn of Doomsday's origin and see the savage rematch between Superman and Doomsday, the two guys who killed each other. (Doomsday was dead too, right? Find out how he was resurrected in this mini-series!)

Super-editor Mike Carlin says that the focus of 1994 will be on Clark Kent, Lois, and Lex Luthor II. Among the many questions which will be answered are: Will Superman get a haircut? (No.) Will Superman find out the truth about Lex? (Yes.) Will Superman rejoin the Justice League? (Not in the foreseeable future.) Is Lexcorp in for some trouble in '94? (You bet—Project Cadmus figures heavily into it, too.) Will Superman ever wear the black costume again? (Maybe; if he ever wants to heal any of his wounds, he's going to *have* to wear it. Hmmm...) Will the Cyborg Superman return? (*Yes*.) The motivations behind these actions and more will slowly unfold throughout '94.

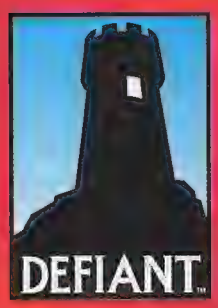
While there are no plans for an Eradicator series, he will be appearing more and more frequently in *The Outsiders*. Also, expect Bizarro to return in a five-part story called "Bizarro's World," starting in January.

The ongoing "Knightquest" storyline will head up the Batman titles, and the foremost question is whether or not Bruce Wayne will return as Batman. Although

Above: Hal Jordan shows off his jewelry collection. Below: You didn't honestly believe we'd seen the last of Doomsday...did you?

GREEN LANTERN AND DOOMSDAY ™ & © DC COMICS.

Kids were never this intense.



the story will wrap up in *Legends of the Dark Knight* #59-#61 in the spring, DC isn't saying how it's all going to end.

Another question waiting to be answered is, "If Azrael became the new Batman, who's going to replace Azrael in the Order of St. Dumas?" The answer is still being discussed, but editor Archie Goodwin says it will be dealt with after "Knightquest."

In other Batman-related crossover news, the Bruce Wayne Dark Knight will be facing off against Spawn in the first of two unconnected *Batman/Spawn* projects (see Image Comics, below). This DC project, slated for an early February release, is to be written by Doug Moench, Chuck Dixon, and Alan Grant and will be drawn by Klaus Janson. Batman also has a rematch against Predator in *Batman/Predator II*, coming sometime in '94. This one will be done by writer Moench and artists Paul Gulacy and Terry Austin. Matt Wagner has tossed some ideas to DC for a *Batman/Grendel II* project for '94, and the publisher is excited about those plans, but nothing has been set yet. As for other crossovers, DC and Marvel are currently holding talks about intercompany crossovers involving three characters from each company, but nothing has been settled at this point.

Bane will return in '94, perhaps in a *Vengeance of Bane II* one-shot by the same team that did the first special. Robin will continue to go on solo patrols, with a few exceptions, in '94. Plans are currently being fleshed out for a "World's Finest: The Next Generation" storyline, teaming Superboy and Robin, to be drawn by the artist who pencils both characters' books, Tom Grummett. Robin will also appear in the *New Titans*, but not as a full-time member. The *Nightwing* mini-series which was originally supposed to be handled by Art Thibert has been retooled and will be done by Dennis O'Neil, with an unnamed art team. Expect it in late '94.

Expect big, permanent (well, as permanent as it can get in a comic) changes—among them a new costume—in Aquaman with the start of his new ongoing series, by Peter David, Kirk Jarvinen, and Brad Vancata.

The 96-page *The Power of Shazam!* hardcover graphic novel, written and painted by Jerry Ordway, is due in January. In this book, Ordway reestablishes the origin of Captain Marvel, the World's Mightiest Mortal, as he embarks on his first adventure. Inspired by the 1940s serials, "The Big Red Cheese" will spar against Black Adam as well as Sivana, whom Ordway says is "Fawcett City's answer to Lex Luthor, but Sivana's P.R. isn't as good. Everyone hates him!" Check out Fawcett City's distinctive appearance: Ordway is giving it an art-deco look. Tentative plans call for spinning off the hardcover into a new ongoing *Shazam!* series. No creative team has been set, but it would be interesting if Ordway had something to do with it.

Betcha never thought the Big Red Cheese could look so tough! Watch for *The Power of Shazam!* by Jerry Ordway.

Is it really the end for Morpheus? Animal Man (inset) will get a new look.

Zero Hour: A Crisis in Time is a five-issue crossover series by writer/penciler Dan Jurgens; it's expected to resolve questions about DC's notorious timeline continuity, and begins this summer. Jurgens says this series will address the inconsistencies in the history of the DC Universe, ranging from the first day of its recorded history to its last. *Zero Hour*'s prelude begins with January's *Valor* #17, in which Valor dies! This sets in motion a time paradox which threatens both the past and future. After all, without Valor, the Legion of Super-Heroes can't exist!

Expect every DC annual to feature Elseworlds stories for each title. Each annual will be in the title's respective format, and readers will be able to see their first *Legion of Super-Heroes* and *Green Arrow* Elseworlds stories, among other firsts.

DC/Vertigo

A runaway success in 1993, Vertigo is showing no signs of slowing down. The three-issue *Witchcraft* mini-series, based on DC's old *Witching Hour* series, is the preeminent Vertigo series slated for '94. Written by James Robinson, this series stars the three witches from *Witching Hour*, who want to avenge themselves against the mortals who went against them. The first issue is set in medieval times and drawn by Peter Snejbjerg; the second, set in Victorian times,

Shazam!, Animal Man, and Sandman ™ & © DC Comics.

is drawn by Michael Zulli; and the third, which takes place in modern times, is drawn by Steve Yeowell, with bridging sequences by Matt Wagner.

Early '94 is the release date for *The Mystery Play*, a hardcover graphic novel by Grant Morrison and Jon J. Muth. *Heart of the Beast*, which is described as a retake on the Frankenstein myth, is due in spring '94.

Chiaroscuro, a five-issue mini-series written by Dave Rosen and expected for mid-1994, looks back at the life of Leonardo da Vinci through the eyes of his young apprentice. Also expected in mid-'94: *Blood and Shadows*, a "fairly explicit horror story" by Joe R. Lansdale and Mark A. Nelson, and *Rites of Alchemy*, a 10-issue series by Dick Foreman (*Black Orchid*) and Dave Johnson (*Mercy*).

Due in the fall of '94: *Goddess*, by writer Garth Ennis, which stars the most powerful woman in the world and details what happens when she uses her powers. A *Books of Magic* regular series by John Rieber and Gary Amaro is also in the works; it stars Tim Hunter from *The Books of Magic* mini-series.

DC has also hinted that Grant Morrison is writing a major Vertigo project in '94 which will have the same scope that *Sandman* does right now. Nothing more is known about the project.

The *Jonah Hex: Two-Gun Mojo* mini-series was so well-received that Joe R. Lansdale and Tim Truman will do another series in '94. This sequel promises to be much stranger and wilder than its predecessor.

Major changes are also in store for existing Vertigo titles, the biggest of which will start affecting *Sandman* in late December. "The Kindly Ones" begins in *Sandman* #57. DC says the story, by Neil Gaiman and Marc Hempel, will be the last major story arc of the series, which is slated to end within the next year or so. There are rumors that Morpheus, the Sandman, will be destroyed at this story's end, since Gaiman has said, "It will be a tragedy, but an upbeat tragedy," and promised that the story will result in big changes and that it will resolve several plotlines.

Major changes are also on tap for *Swamp Thing* in January. When new writers Grant Morrison and Mark Millar jump on board for a "mini-series within a series," Dr. Alec Holland wakes up in a South American hospital with a strange dream—that he was a swamp creature. Is it just a *Dallas* episode, or what? Well, when the Swamp Thing starts running amok and killing people in a Louisiana swamp, you can bet that there's much more to it. This storyline is said to be a perfect start for new readers. New penciler Philip Hester comes on board, and inker Kim DeMulder remains with the title. After this storyline ends, Morrison hands over the writing reins to Millar.

In *Animal Man*, Buddy loses his trademark costume and becomes the center of a religious cult. Plenty of changes are in store for the title, as series regulars Jamie Delano and Steve Pugh inject some high-octane fuel into one of Vertigo's popular characters.

Defiant

Defiant's first release of 1994 will be February's *War Dancer*. Co-created by Jim Shooter and Alan Weiss, *War Dancer* begins on ancient Plasm (the world of *Warriors of Plasm*) as Ahrq Tsolmec (pronounced "ark-soul-meck") and his beloved begin the Dance of Two, a dangerous ritual which could determine the fate of the entire planet. They don't get a chance to finish it; Ahrq's enemies disrupt the dance, causing a quantum rift which forces Ahrq to "dance" for 25,000 years. Now Ahrq walks our Earth, searching for his beloved, and determined to destroy the universe if he doesn't find her. He finds Sally Throckmorton, a modern-day incarnation of his lost love—but is she enough to stop him from causing some serious damage?

Charlemagne debuts in March. Created by Shooter and editor Deborah Purcell, and written by novelist Philip Nutman and penciled by Adam Pollina, *Charlemagne*'s story begins as young Charles Smith travels from Kentucky to Vietnam to find his MIA brother. All Charles finds is tragedy, destruction, and newfound powers; he is transformed into a man with remarkable abilities.

There are other books coming in '94 for which Defiant has not yet set definitive release dates. One is *Dogs of War*, which stars Ironhead and Shooter, two characters from *Warriors of Plasm*. No creative team is set for this title, which might be a limited series. *Prudence and Caution*, a book written by Chris Claremont, teams Prudence (introduced in *Warriors of Plasm* #5) with Ironhead. This series will be a "buddy book," yet the characters don't like each other, which should make for some interesting comedy. *Glory* stars Louise Johnson, the 57-year-old grandmother from *Warriors of Plasm*. This series, which may be written by Jim Shooter, aims to break the female stereotype of "super-babe" heroines.

Defiant adds new titles to its team in '94: *Charlemagne* (below) and *War Dancer* (bottom).

Charlemagne and War Dancer ™ & © Enlightened Entertainment Partners, L.P.

Image Comics

Image's Cosmic Images line of books, which focuses on outer space adventures, will premiere in February. Three original books are set to launch this new line: *The Knight*, *Weapon Zero*, and *Galactic Legion*. These titles begin as a destructive force known as the Abyss is tearing apart the galaxy—and rapidly heading towards Earth.

Extreme Studios' *The Knight*, which many readers might remember as a back-up story in *Bloodstrike* #2-#4, spotlights Major Ironside as he and his team embark on a suicide mission against the Abyss.

Spawn and Violator ™ & © Todd McFarlane. Ripclaw ™ & © Top Cow Productions.

Rob Liefeld plots this book, with Eric Stephenson scripting and Chuck Jones penciling.

Galactic Legion is an April one-shot by Jim Valentino and Keith Giffen. This series looks at the Image Universe 1,000 years in the future. An ongoing *Galactic Legion* series is planned for late '94.

Weapon Zero, by Marc Silvestri and newcomer Joe Benitez, will ship in June. This complex science fiction series focuses on a bunch of children who were abducted by aliens in the long-ago past and given special powers. These children, hibernating at an alien base inside the moon, were awakened in 1969, when astronauts landed on the moon. Now, in 1994, these children are full-grown and waiting to destroy humankind—as per their programming.

Late February is the release date for the Image version of the two *Batman/Spawn* crossovers; as in DC's otherwise completely independent and unrelated one-shot, this Batman will be Bruce Wayne. In a surprise move, Spawn artist/creator Todd McFarlane grabbed Frank Miller to write the 48-page bookshelf one-shot, which is not connected to any previous or past continuity. Readers might recall Miller last wrote Batman in his "Batman: Year One" storyline in 1987. When asked if Miller is doing full plot and script, McFarlane responds, "It's Frank's gig. I'm just there for feedback." The plot is still a secret, but McFarlane is quick to say, "Don't expect it to be deep or psychological. It'll just be something that, when you read it, will be really cool."

Jim Valentino's *The Pact*, a three-issue mini-series, also appears in February. The quartet, which debuted in *Shadowhawk II* #3, is fleeing from the training facility known as the Center. The Pact then takes matters into their own hands and counterattacks the Center. The book will be written by Valentino and Len Senecal, penciled by Walter McDaniel, and inked by Matt Banning. It has a guest appearance by Youngblood.

At left: *Violator* mini-series, Alan Moore, Bart Sears, 'nuff said. Below: Rising star Jordan Raskin pencils one of two upcoming *Ripclaw* solo shots.

Also due in March is Jim Lee's four-issue *Kindred* mini-series, which explores the strange relationship between Grifter (from *WildC.A.T.s*) and Backlash (from *StormWatch* #0).

The Others, a three-issue mini-series by Valentino, Scott Kolins, and Jon Holdredge, is scheduled for spring. Picking up the plot from *Shadowhawk* #4, the Others realize that they cannot hide from the rest of the planet; this series is the story of their "arrival" in the world.

Rob Liefeld's Extreme Studios will return *Youngblood*, *Brigade*, and *Bloodstrike* to a monthly basis in April after a hiatus; Liefeld is taking some time off to concentrate on those books and get them back on track.

The new *Ripclaw* mini-series, written by Silvestri and penciled by Greg Capullo, is also due in the spring. It will be followed in the summer by another *Ripclaw* mini-series done by Silvestri, Jordan Raskin, and Kevin Nowlan. Other Silvestri projects include a *Heatwave and Cyblade* mini-series, as well as a *Cyberforce/Stryke Force Sourcebook*.

The eagerly awaited *Violator* mini-series will be coming your way in '94 from Todd McFarlane's camp. With a story by award-winning writer Alan Moore and stunning art by Bart Sears and Mark Pennington, this series has the devil send the Phlebiac Brothers to Earth to rough up their little brother, the Violator. Will the Violator, stuck in his human form, be forced to strike up an alliance with Spawn? Find out in this three-issue mini-series.

Malibu Comics

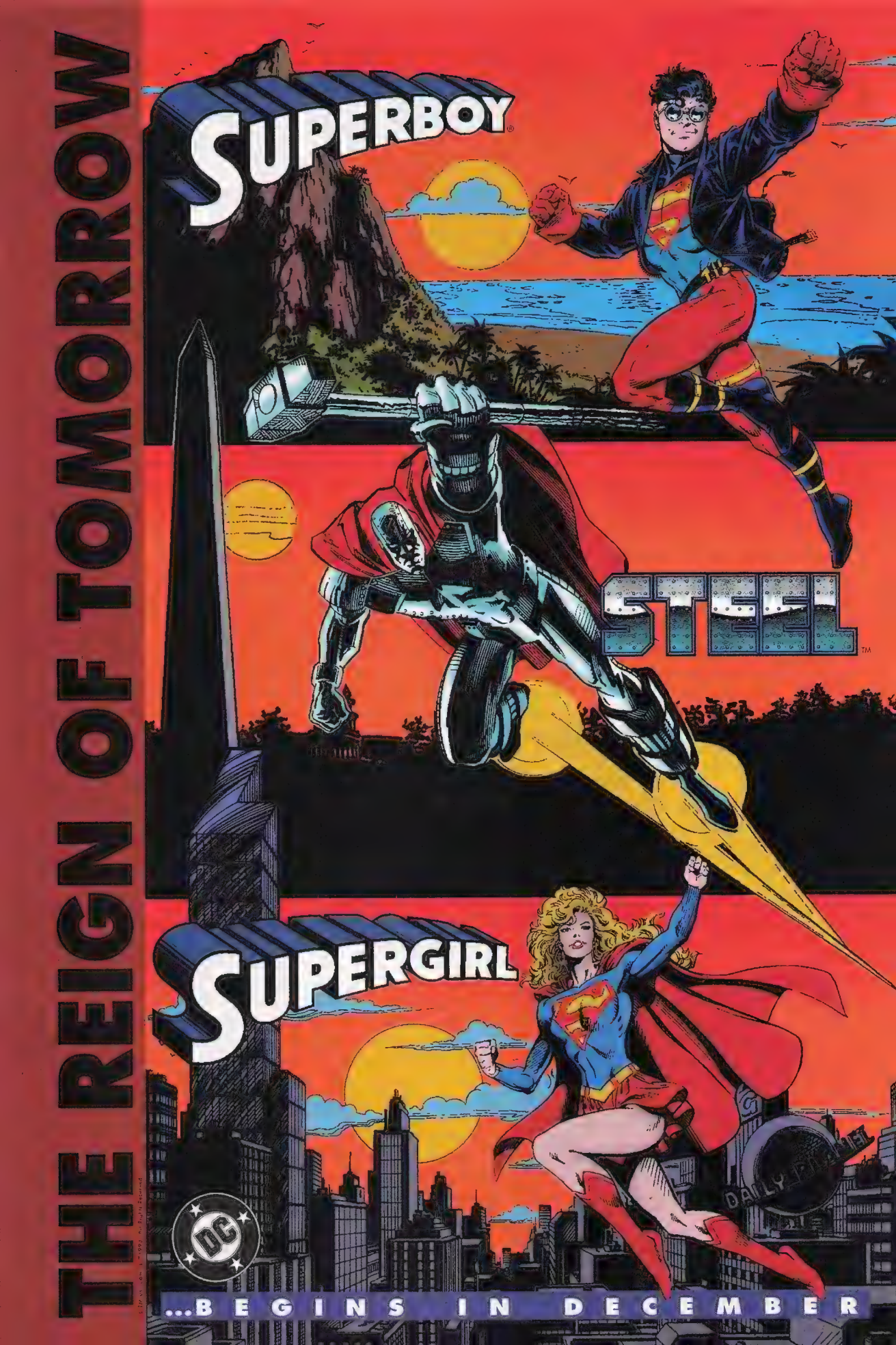
Malibu's biggest release in 1994 will be its creator-owned comics line, Bravura. Malibu is vying to become the leader in quality creator-owned projects through Bravura, which touts big-name creators.

The first book in the Bravura line is *'Breed*, by writer/artist Jim Starlin, starting in January. Starlin, who limited himself mainly to writing projects in the recent past, both writes and draws his latest creator-owned venture, which explores the horror/adventure genre. "*'Breed* is the story of a man who discovers he's half-human/half-demon, and how he deals with his heritage," Starlin says. "Working in this horror/adventure genre allows me to explore some rather disturbing territory I've never ventured into." *'Breed* is currently planned as three mini-series of six issues each.

Bravura's February release is Howard Chaykin's four-issue *Power & Glory*. Comic fans are gearing up for Chaykin's take on superheroes. *Power & Glory* is set in a society not too different from our own, in which image has replaced reality in the fabric of American life. Superheroes also fit this criteria: they look the part, but lack actual substance. "The Japanese are great with stereos, the Germans are hot with cars, but nobody makes a superhero like the USA," says Chaykin about the series.

Power & Glory focuses on two characters: the American Powerhouse, a superhero who is actually quite cowardly, and a "behind the scenes" guy who does all of the work.

Steven Grant and Gil Kane's *Edge* debuts in March. *Edge* stars a bunch of super-powered people, known as Ulti-


THE REIGN OF TOMORROW
SUPERBOY
STEEL
SUPERGIRL
DC
...BEGINS IN DECEMBER

Malibu's creator-owned line, Bravura, will include Howard Chaykin's *Power & Glory* (above), Jim Starlin's *'Breed* (right), and Walt Simonson's *Star Slammers* (below).

mates, who were created to build a perfect world. This does not mean, by any stretch, that the Ultimates are supposed to agree with their "purpose." One man—Edge, an ordinary human—realizes that there's something's wrong with the Ultimates and tries to put a stop to them. *Edge* consists of two four-issue mini-series.

April heralds the return of Jim Starlin's *Dreadstar*. Originally published by both Epic and First Comics, creator Starlin once again hands over the writing reins to Peter David, who took over the original series with #41. This four-issue series begins 20 years after the last issue of *Dreadstar*. It stars Vance Dreadstar's daughter, who is searching for her lost father. David will write the series, and Ernie Colón will draw it.

Walter Simonson's *Star Slammers* also returns, in May. Long-time readers might remember that the Star Slammers' first and last time out was in *Marvel Graphic Novel* #6, released in 1983. The Star Slammer Rojas is the protagonist of this new five-issue series; he is captured in an intergalactic war, becoming the first Slammer ever to be taken alive. There are two factions among his captors, and each one wants to use Rojas' skills for its own purposes.

An as-yet unscheduled Bravura project is Marv Wolfman and Shawn McManus' *The Man Called A•X*, which is set in a futuristic society. A•X wakes up from a coma knowing he's supposed to kill someone—but he's forgotten who and why. This doesn't stop him from trying to complete his job, even as he searches for answers.

Other unscheduled series are Dan Brereton's *The Nocturnals*, Dan Jurgens' *Deuce*, and Norm Breyfogle's *Metaphysique*. *The Nocturnals* is described by Brereton as a cross-genre work which combines elements of authors Ray Bradbury, Philip K. Dick, and H.P. Lovecraft. The story kicks off as Doc Horror inadvertently destroys his planet by opening a portal which lets aliens into his world. He escapes to Earth with his daughter and forms a band of inhuman creatures to prevent these aliens from getting to Earth. Brereton will write and fully paint the series, with Howard Chaykin acting as story consultant to ensure, in Brereton's words, "that it's not a piece of garbage. I want it to be easy to follow."

Deuce, written and drawn by Jurgens, stars two teenage brothers who wake up with super powers—and the last thing that occurs to them is to use their powers to "do good." The brothers are not of this Earth, it turns out, and people from their place of origin are tracking them down.

Metaphysique, according to writer/artist Breyfogle, is about "a sorcerer with muscles." He says this series combines both the metaphysical and extremely physical aspects of a superhero. It is expected to be out in the latter half of '94.

Three new ongoing titles are being added to the Ultraverse line. Two of them are coming in January: *Wrath* and *Rune* (which sound kinda neat when spoken together). *Wrath*, plotted and penciled by David Ammerman and scripted by Mike W. Barr, stars Ultraverse's sole super-powered mercenary, first seen in *Prototype* #4. In *Wrath* #1, the character breaks his ties to Aladdin and sets out on a freelance basis. *Rune* #1, by Chris Ulm and Barry Windsor-Smith, continues the story from *Rune* #0. Rune is tracking down four ultras who, when together, create a deadly fifth power. The vampire wants to stop this from happening.

Ultraverse Premiere, a monthly anthology title which showcases individual Ultraverse characters, debuts in March. Each issue will have an ongoing anchor story, along with two other stories; there will occasionally be a painted poster insert (#1 will have a painted Dan Brereton Freex poster). This title is tentatively priced at $2.50 for 40 pages.

With the success of its *Street Fighter II* comic, Malibu has new licensed comics coming in '94, including *Bruce Lee*, *Mortal Kombat*, and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. The six-issue *Bruce Lee* series, by Mike Baron, Val Mayerick, and Jim Sherman, pretends that Lee never died and explores what his legend would be like in the Los Angeles of the '90s. *Mortal Kombat* is a six-issue mini-series based on the video game, by Charles Marshall and Patrick Rolo. *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* is a four-issue mini-series which depicts the Deep Space Nine outpost before the arrival of the Federation.

Marvel Comics

The books to watch in '94, according to Marvel, are the Spider-Man titles, because huge changes are about to take place. In February's *Amazing Spider-Man* #388, the mystery of Peter Parker's parents is resolved. However, the whole situation has threatened Peter's private life so much that, as a result, he won't want to be Peter Parker anymore and will hide more and more within his Spider-Man persona. (There are rumors of a costume change, too, but for now, they are only rumors.)

The new creative team for *Spider-Man* in '94 is Howard Mackie and Tom Lyle; the other Spidey teams remain the same. A *Black Cat* four-issue limited-series, due to start in May, will spin off from the Spider-storyline. No creative team is set yet. The *Nightwatch* ongoing

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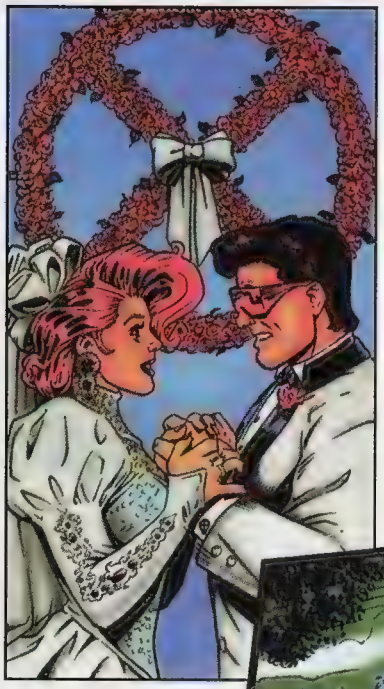

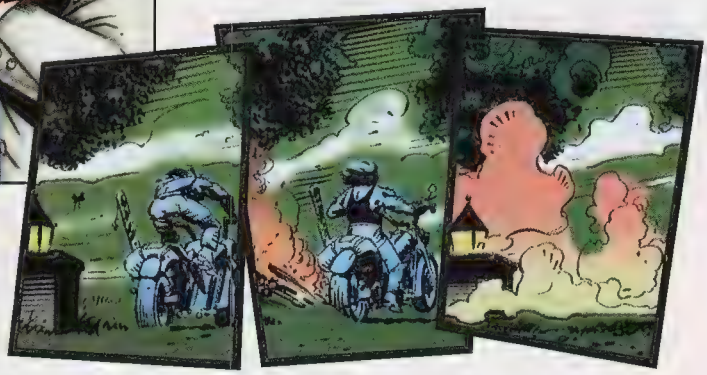

Will Scott and Jean's marriage actually start off smoothly? Check out *Wolverine* to see what Logan does after leaving the X-Men (at right).

series is slated to start in February, starring the character who first appeared in *Web of Spider-Man* #97-#100; it will be written by Terry Kavanaugh and drawn by Derek Yaniger. There is also a *Spider-Man/X-Factor* three-issue mini-series by Kurt Busiek and Pat Broderick due for '94. Another mini-series will be *Spider-Man: Web of Doom* by Jack C. Harris and Scott Kolins, wherein a crook is caught by Spidey, is webbed up by him to await the police...and is found dead from starvation a week later, still webbed up!

Uncanny X-Men #310 in January contains Scott Summers' bachelor party; it leads into *X-Men* #30, which has the wedding of Scott and Jean Grey. (Also in that issue, a reluctant Sabretooth joins the team to replace the wounded Wolverine.) After the wedding, there will be a special four-issue limited series which tells the story of the couple's honeymoon, and how it's not as romantic as they would like it to be.

No longer an X-Man and *sans* adamantium, Wolverine becomes a wanderer in his own title, visiting places that were important to him in his life. He meets up with Kitty and Nightcrawler, who believe he's not going to live through his ordeal.

In other X-news, *Excalibur* will be more closely related to the other X-books in '94. Its new creative team, Richard Ashford, Ken Landsford, and Cam Smith, will redefine the team, and Kitty Pryde and Nightcrawler will decide whether to stay with Excalibur or rejoin the X-Men. In *X-Factor* #100 in January, expect a core member to contract the fatal Legacy virus which affects both mutants *and* humans. Deadpool will receive another four-issue mini-series in June, written by Nicieza, with an artist to be announced.

Marvel is celebrating the Punisher's 20th anniversary by completely dismantling his status quo. The story called "Pariah" kicks off '94, and is part of the trilogy of stories which began with "Suicide Run." In "Pariah," an alienated Frank Castle finds that everyone, even the Marvel heroes who used to team up with him, considers him an outlaw and wants him dead. This story leads into "Final Entry," which will reveal the final fate of Frank Castle—which might not be what readers think it will be. (Watch *Punisher 2099* for repercussions from this story.)

The biggest event in the Avengers family of titles occurs within the pages of *Captain America*. A 12-issue storyline called "Fighting Chance" begins in #425, wherein Cap discovers that the super-soldier serum that has given him his enhanced abilities is also causing his body chemistry to break down, seriously debilitating him. The more Cap exerts himself with this condition, the less mobility he has, forcing him to retire as Captain America. He spends the 12 issues searching for his replacement. Long-time Cap writer Mark Gruenwald and artist Dave Hoover chronicle this sad tale of the Living Legend.

There are big plans for Iron Man and his contemporaries in '94. In *Iron Man*, a conflict develops between Stark Enterprises and Stane International; even though Stark owns Stane, a lot of criminal activities are going on down there. These activities will affect Stark and his standing as a hero in the eyes of the world. He cannot rely on Jim Rhodes for support like he used to—because they are now enemies.

You can see Rhodey's reaction to all this in his *War Machine* book, which starts in February, by Len Kaminski, Gabriel Gecko, and Don Cameron. This series has Rhodey hook up with an activist organization that focuses on world problems such as hunger and oppression. There's also an *Iron Man 2020* bookshelf format book due out in '94. This one's written and inked by Walt Simonson and penciled by Bob Wiacek.

Things continue to heat up in January with *Fantastic Four* in a six-part storyline called, "Nobody Gets Out Alive." The focus of this story is two-fold: Johnny Storm discovers Lyja is pregnant; and Nathaniel Richards, Reed's father, is now ruling Latveria in Dr. Doom's stead. Throughout the first half of '94, *FF* will have an extremely tight continuity with *Namor* and *Silver Surfer*.

An extremely popular Marvel cult book is *Guardians of the Galaxy*, and starting with #50 in May, expect something shocking to happen to Major Victory. The *Galactic Guardians* four-issue mini-series will spin off of *Guardians of the Galaxy* in May, starring Martinex, Phoenix, Hollywood, Spirit of Vengeance, Firelord, and Replica. The spinoff will examine the feud between Hollywood

Big things are in store for Captain America.

Captain America, Deadpool, Logan, Scott Summers, and Jean Grey ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

and Mainframe (who, oddly enough, are really Wonder Man and Vision). This one's written by Gregory Wright, with an art team pending.

Another spinoff comes from *Silver Sable:* The Intruders—the super-powered members of the Wild Pack—will receive their own limited series in '94. Rumors have it that the Wild Pack will get one too.

Besides January's *Beavis and Butt-Head* comic written by Mike Lackey and drawn by Rick Parker, there's *Spumco Comic Book*, a massively thick comic by John Kricfalusi (creator of *Ren & Stimpy*), which will feature the adventures of Jimmy the Hapless Boy, Hee-Hah the Atomic Pig, and George Liquor. There will be reprint pages from Marvel's Golden Age funny books, hilariously "redialogued" by Kricfalusi.

Marvel is relaunching Conan in *Conan the Adventurer* by Roy Thomas and Raphael Kayanan, which returns the character to his younger days. This series will further examine the kingdoms of the Hyborian Age, and is an excellent jumping-on point for new readers.

Marvel will also be doing a series of mini-series with some King Features Syndicate characters, including the Phantom, Buck Rogers, Prince Valiant, and Mandrake the Magician, all of whom will be redesigned a bit. The first release will be *The Phantom*, by Dave DeVries and Glenn Lumsden, the team that did the first *Eternal Warrior Yearbook*; it will update the character for the '90s.

Major developments are in the works for *Hellstorm* next year. Writer Len Kaminski and artist Leonardo Manco continue with this series, which Marvel compares to *Sandman* and other Vertigo titles. Will Hellstorm join the Midnight Sons in '94? "No, [Hellstorm] is so far removed from that," says Gary Guzzo, Marvel's publicity manager. "He doesn't want to be a part of them...He's more apt to try to destroy them more than anything else!"

And speaking of the Midnight Sons, a new *Blade* ongoing series will replace the *Nightstalkers* series, starting with a #1 issue in early '94. Also, in the aftermath of his limited series, Blaze will receive a new ongoing series, courtesy of writer Larry Hama and artist Henry Martinez.

Daredevil embarks on a new direction in #326 in the aftermath of the "death" of Matt Murdock. The next storyline, "Tree of Knowledge," includes major developments with the Hand, H.Y.D.R.A., and, of course, the newly resurrected Elektra—who, as we all know from the last story, is not what she appears to be.

Peter David, Gary Frank, and Cam Smith will continue to set the course for *Incredible Hulk* in '94. Watch for a big upcoming wedding issue with Rick Jones and Marlo; it'll be a shocker for fans. Also, Bruce hooks up with Betty again—but for how long? He will also start to experience the results of the *Future Imperfect* mini-series, which will finally be tied into the regular continuity.

Marvel will pay homage to its earliest titles with "Marvel Milestone" bookshelf books. There will be three books—*Tales to Astonish*, *Tales of Suspense*, and *Strange Tales*—which will contain stories starring modern versions of the characters from the original books. *Tales to Astonish*, by Peter David and John Estes, will star the Hulk, Hank Pym, and the Wasp. *Tales of Suspense*, by James Robinson and Colin MacNeil, will feature Captain America and Iron Man. *Strange Tales*, by Kurt Busiek and Ricardo Villagran, features Dr. Strange, Thing, and Human Torch.

In the New Warriors family of titles, *New Warriors* will retain Fabian Nicieza, Darick Robertson, and Larry Mahlstedt, and continuity between that book and both *Nova* and *Night Thrasher* will be tight. Expect the Warriors to cross into *X-Force*, also written by Nicieza, which will have a few Warriors join the mutant team.

With the cancellation of *Alpha Flight*, there will be a series of mini-series that spotlight its former members. The first will be *Northstar*, by Simon Furman and Dario Carrasco Jr.

Ghost Rider 2099 joins the 2099 family of books in March; it's by Len Kaminski, Chris Bachalo, and MarkBuckingham. This series will be linked to the current character, but fans will have to wait for the monumental events that transpire in *Ghost Rider* #50, coming in April, for clues as to how.

Zorro ™ & © Zorro Productions, Inc.

A Frank Miller cover kicks off Topps' *Zorro* series!

Deadpool will be featured in another mini-series.

Topps Comics

Zorro #1 debuts in January with a stunning Frank Miller cover. Topps editor-in-chief Jim Salicrup says that the series, which gives the character a modern twist but keeps him within the bounds of his time, will be very intense, and that Zorro will face much tougher adversaries. The series writer is veteran Don McGregor, known for his acclaimed Black Panther stories, while Mike Mayhew is penciling and John Nyberg is inking. Salicrup says that this first issue, unlike those of the past, will come unbagged, and that the publisher is moving away from polybagged comics.

X-O Squad #0, based on the Saturday morning cartoon, also premieres in January. It will go off in different directions from the cartoon, according to Salicrup. He describes this title as a "futuristic X-

Men in reverse," where mutants are in control and humans revolt by wearing exoskeletons. Like Topps' *Zorro* #0, this book is 16 pages at $1.

In February, *X-O Squad* debuts as a three-issue mini-series by Len Wein, Joe Staton, and Del Barras. *Zorro* #2, with a cover by Jae Lee, also comes out then. It introduces two major characters: Lady Rawhide, whom Salicrup describes as Zorro's Catwoman, and Moonstalker, a Native American.

Cadillacs & Dinosaurs, based on both the comic and cartoon, will be a series of mini-series, the first of which debuts in February. This series is written by Roy Thomas, with assistance from Mark Schultz and is drawn by Dick Giordano. This series will also have a back-up tale by Thomas and Rich Buckler, which recaps Schultz's *Cadillacs & Dinosaurs* comic series.

February also debuts the new *Jurassic Park: Raptors Attack* four-issue mini-series, by *Jurassic Park: Raptor* teamsters Steve Englehart and Armando Gil, who is now penciling and inking the book. In this mini-series, a corporation uses raptors for its own evil purposes.

An adaptation of Ray Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles* debuts in a one-shot special in April. Look for the three-issue *Satan's Six: Hellspawn* mini-series then, too; it's written by Tony Isabella and drawn by John Cleary, whom Salicrup says has a "cartoony Todd McFarlane style." This book spotlights the popular Satan's Six member.

The Kirbyverse crossover called *Victory* starts in spring. This four-issue series heralds the return of Captain Victory, who was last seen battling aliens. This crossover, guest starring every Kirbyverse character, will lead into an ongoing *Captain Victory* series by Steve Englehart and Vince Russell.

Mars Attacks #1, the comic book sequel to the controversial "Mars Attacks" trading card set that Topps released in 1962, debuts in May. Salicrup couldn't say much about this project's creative team, but he did promise a big-name writer who shall remain nameless. Having said this much, we can...say no more.

Salicrup says that Topps will publish a *Lone Ranger* series in the summer. It'll be by a couple of gents who are no strangers to the wild west—Joe R. Lansdale and Tim Truman.

Valiant

January is Shadowman Month, wherein Valiant will be releasing tons of Shadowman-related books. Among them are *Shadowman* #0, a Shadowman trade paperback, and *Shadowman* #24. *Shadowman* #0, written and penciled by series regular Bob Hall and inked by Tom Ryder, has a regular edition for $2.50 and a wraparound chromium cover edition for $3.50. The *Shadowman* trade paperback reprints *Shadowman* #1-#3 and #6, excluding the *Unity* crossovers. Packaged with the book is "Dark Passages," an eight-page comic diary by Master Darque. *Shadowman* #24 is Ryder's first issue as the series' regular inker.

Timewalker debuts in February; it stars Ivar, the brother of Armstrong and the Eternal Warrior. This series will deal with some behind-the-scenes events in the Valiant Universe. For example, there will be an issue in which readers will see the entire story of the death of Bloodshot, which was partially depicted in *Rai* #0.

X-O Manowar #28 has what is described as "a major, *major* event" in the Valiant Universe. Valiant isn't saying exactly what it is, but they are hinting that the X-O armor will face its greatest challenge—and be defeated. *Solar, Man of the Atom* #33 kicks off a three-part Solar the Destroyer story. This story, which was originally planned as a mini-series, will span thousands of years. Also due in February is the *Solar* #0 trade paperback, which reprints the "Alpha and Omega" storyline by Jim Shooter, Barry Windsor-Smith, and Bob Layton. Bagged with the book is a poster of the final panel of the story, which is the largest comic book panel of all time.

Tentative for February is the release of Upper Deck's Valiant Era II cards, which contain Valiant's 1993 covers, with the exception of one month. Throughout February, each Valiant comic will contain a resealable pouch on the inside of the book containing a trading card of the omitted month from the card set.

Here are a few things to be on the lookout for in '94: an *Armorines* ongoing series in May or June; *Turok* #0; yearbooks for Bloodshot and Shadowman; and the end of the Malev War in *Rai and the Future Force* and *Magnus, Robot Fighter* in August. This event will prompt a complete revamping of the two titles. ☆

Valiant opens 1994 with Shadowman Month (left). Below: Aric and the X-O armor will be tested yet again—but will they emerge victorious?

Shadowman and X-O Manowar ™ & © Voyager Communications, Inc.

A GREAT COMIC FOR TODAY'S FANS!

AN ANATOMY LESSON FOR TODAY'S ARTISTS!

Wild Angels

WHERE REALITY AND VIRTUAL REALITY MEET...

✧ THEY'LL BE HERE IN JANUARY! WILL YOU?

✧ BY NICK VINCE AND PINO RINALDI.

OUR 3/4's WRENCH ISN'T AS BIG AS OUR 7/8THS!

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Looking Back

The major events of 1993

By William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert

We all saw it coming. Towards the end of 1992, all of the comic industry's trade publications were forecasting—warning, really—"Look out! 1993's going to be a monster."

Well, they were right. The signs were there, of course. In 1992, DC, through the death of Superman, stirred up more mainstream interest in comics than had been seen in the past 50 years. Hot young companies like Image and Valiant couldn't print comics fast enough to keep up with demand. All segments of the industry were encouraged by the strong finish last year, and determined to pump up the volume in 1993. There seemed to be no doubt in anyone's mind that they could do it again—the only question was how. How do you top a year during which Superman died, *Batman* returned, Image was formed, and Valiant performed like no small publisher had before?

Year of the Publishers

1992 is often looked upon as the year of the creator—more specifically, the year of the artist. In 1993, the empire struck back. Many publishers, coveting the sales of those comic book rebels, the Image crew, and encouraged by the success of an upstart publisher, Valiant, launched an all-out attack on the superhero market with superhero universes of their own, most of which were character- and publisher-oriented, rather than creator-oriented. So if 1992 was the year of the creator, 1993 has been the year of the publisher.

Setting the Pace: DC Comics

Over the past year, DC has shed its reputation as the most conservative publisher in comics. However, that hasn't made the company any less dependable—it's the IBM of the comics world. Some folks may sell more comics, some may be flashier, but DC always gets the job done.

The publisher certainly took care of business this year by bringing the two most popular characters in comics—maybe the two most popular characters in any medium—to the forefront of public attention. Superman and Batman can once again lay claim to the title of "World's Finest Superheroes."

Superman didn't start 1993 as the world's finest anything, except maybe the world's finest corpse. His death in November '92 was one of the biggest events in the history of comics. DC topped the momentous death of Superman with its "Reign of the Supermen"

By the time *Knightfall* ended, a new Batman (inset) had emerged to take over for the broken Bruce Wayne.

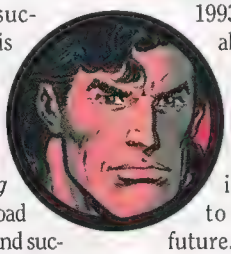
Batman (new and old), Bane, Death, and all Supermen™ & © DC Comics.

story arc, which occupied the four Superman books. After introducing four variant Supermen, all of whom seemed to have a legitimate claim to being the Man of Steel, "Reign" culminated in the return of the genuine item himself.

Batman was full of surprises in '93 as well. A pair of inconspicuous late 1992 releases—the *Sword of Azrael* mini-series and the *Vengeance of Bane* one-shot—set the stage for the most high-profile Batman storyline since Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns*. Bane literally broke the back of Batman. Jean Paul Valley, a.k.a. Azrael, took up the cloak and cowl of the caped crusader, and his Batman is quite a change of pace from Wayne's version. (For more details on the changes to Batman, Superman, and other favorite comic book characters, see "Hardly Recognizable" on page 128.)

Four "Supermen" later, has the original cheated Death and returned for good?

DC also expanded its successful Vertigo imprint this year, proving to mainstream audiences that comics aren't just about superheroes. Titles like *Sandman*, *Hellblazer*, and *Swamp Thing* have continued to reach a broad audience thanks to Vertigo, and successful projects like this year's *Death: The High Cost of Living* ensured the survival of non-superhero and non-specialized comics in a market formerly dominated by men in tights.



In the Line of Fire: Image

Despite the continued success of many Image titles the company has received harsh criticism from nearly all quarters of the industry due to its inability to meet shipping deadlines. This problem continued to plague Image throughout the year, despite the formation of its own publishing company at the beginning of 1993. The now infamous gang of seven—Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee, Marc Silvestri, Jim Valentino, Erik Larsen, and Whilce Portacio—broke off from their publisher, Malibu, to transform Image from an imprint into a true publishing company. Many thought the change would bring Image's shipping schedules back in line, but that has not been the case. The most grievous example of the problem turned what could have been the summer's most successful project into a non-event. *Deathmate*, an intercompany crossover between Image and Valiant, was plagued by delays on Image's side.

Not all of Image's titles suffer from these problems, however. A consistent publishing schedule has helped push Todd McFarlane's *Spawn* to the top of the charts. *Spawn* sold more copies this year than any other single title. When critics bashed McFarlane for his writing ability, he responded by hiring some of the best writers in the business, in the person of Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman, Frank Miller, and Dave Sim, to script the title. The character seems destined to achieve even greater heights of fame as McFarlane prepares to work on a *Spawn/Batman* crossover in conjunction with DC Comics, which is to be drawn by him and written by Frank Miller.

Rob Liefeld made headlines of a different sort in 1993 by taking a leave of absence from the studio he founded in 1992. Liefeld will leave Extreme Studios after completing *Deathmate Red*, to think about his future. Citing the day-to-day grind of running the studio as the reason behind his need for a breather, Liefeld said he hopes to come back with a fresh perspective on the entertainment industry—meaning comics, movies, or perhaps some other form of entertainment. Just weeks after Liefeld announced his departure, Extreme reported the addition of fan-favorite artist Art Thibert to the fold. Despite the fact that Thibert himself was not known for his ability to meet deadlines during his tenure on Marvel's *Cable* series, Extreme has appeared to make some headway on their scheduling difficulties in recent weeks.

Jim Lee has also come under fire this year, but not for scheduling problems or writing ability—for his lack of output! Since completing his successful *WildC.A.T.s* mini-series early this year, Lee has virtually disappeared from the comic scene. After turning in work monthly for five years, Lee's output in '93 dropped to two issues of *WildC.A.T.s*, a few scattered covers, and three short installments of *Deathblow*. It's possible that Lee is foregoing art to concentrate on running his production company, Aegis Entertainment, because his Homage Studios protégés are among the best artists in comics. Scott Clark and Trevor Scott's work on *StormWatch* has been a pleasant surprise, and Nick Manabat (*Cybernary*) has been one of the most promising artists to surface in

What might have been? *Deathmate* had a chance to be the hottest event of the summer, but delays on the Image side held it back.

MAUL ™ & © AEGIS ENTERTAINMENT. RIPCLAW ™ & © TOP COW PRODUCTIONS. TUROK ™ & © WESTERN PUBLISHING. X-O MANOWAR ™ & © VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS.

Tribe, one of the titles canceled by Image, is now published by its creators.

comics this year. Of course, Jae Lee's art on *WildC.A.T.s Trilogy* has been up to his usual lofty standards. Mark Texiera signed on with Jim Lee to collaborate on the *Union* mini-series. Hot artist Travis Charest, formerly of DC's *Darkstars*, has recently joined the studio as well, giving this small group the best overall art talent in the business.

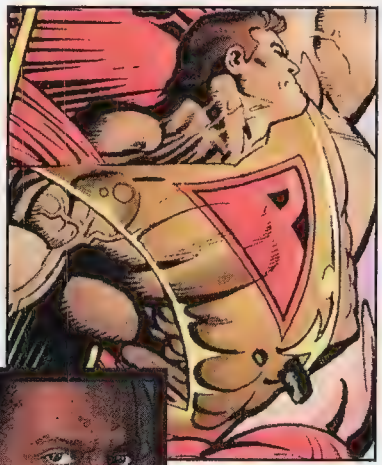
Although the rest of the Image group has labored in the shadow of the three giants, they too have had their tragedies and triumphs. Both Erik (*Savage Dragon*) Larsen and Marc (*Cyberforce*) Silvestri started regular series this year based on last year's successful mini-series. Jim Valentino's Shadowline studio brought veteran writer Alan Moore back to a mainstream audience with the critically acclaimed *1963* series. Whilce Portacio will reportedly get the first issue of his *WetWorks* series out the door in early '94, his first work in the two years since he helped found Image. Sam (*The Maxx*) Kieth and Dale (*Pitt*) Keown continue to plod away at their respective series, seemingly oblivious to the rumors of cancellation surrounding them.

In another controversial move this summer, Image canceled or discontinued many titles by some of its peripheral creators, including Mike Grell's *Shaman's Tears*, Larry Stroman's *Tribe*, and Keith Giffen's *Trencher*. The controversial stated reasons for the cuts include the fact that these titles had inferior sales, at least by Image standards, and poor shipping records. (For more information about the cancellation of these and other high profile titles, turn to "Lament for the Lost" on page 122.)

Bouncing Back: Malibu

After Image decided to publish its own comics, Malibu's future looked pretty grim. Malibu had been doing all of Image's dirty work—that is, printing, publishing, marketing, and so on—and Image titles accounted for the lion's share of Malibu's business. Without those titles, most expected that Malibu would return quietly to its niche as a small publisher with a few marginal-selling titles.

But once it got a taste of the good life, Malibu wasn't about to return to its former ways. The company made its entry into the shared superhero universe arena in 1993, just weeks after its break with Image, in the form of the Ultraverse. Following Valiant's pattern, Malibu carefully designed Ultraverse from the beginning to be an interconnected universe of several titles which could be expanded upon if their success so merited. So far, due to a combination of solid editorial content and progressive marketing, the original Ultraverse books, *Hardcase*, *Prime*, and *The Strangers*, have been followed by several more.



Malibu hopes titles like *Prime* (above) and *Deep Space Nine* (left) will make up for Image's departure.

Malibu has assembled a solid core of creative talent during the past year, including the likes of George Pérez, Jim Starlin, and Norm Breyfogle, but its biggest coup of the year was luring Barry Windsor-Smith away from Valiant. Windsor-Smith, who rocked fans with his regular return to comics last year after an extended absence, is renowned for his intricate pencils, as well as his ability to raise the level of talent of those working around him. Smith's epic *Rune* story will run through all the Ultraverse titles and culminate in the release of *Rune* #0.

Ultraverse was only part of Malibu's expansion plans. The publisher has recently announced the formation of Bravura, an imprint of creator-owned titles. Jim Starlin's *'Breed* and *Dreadstar* (with Peter David) and Howard Chaykin's *Power & Glory* will inaugurate the imprint, with *Deuce* from writer/artist Dan Jurgens to follow shortly. Malibu also entered the licensed comic arena earlier this year by obtaining the rights to *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*.

Malibu also changed its name this year to Malibu Entertainment. The alteration is more than cosmetic: the company acquired video production and video game companies in 1993. It has already produced a video as part the storyline of its Ultraverse title *Firearm*, and Malibu intends to release Ultraverse-based video games for all popular platforms by the middle of 1994.

Driving the Competition: Valiant

More than any other publisher, Valiant has guided the comic book industry into its current superhero-dominated state. The company's template for success appears simple enough on the surface, and many have tried to duplicate it: they market to investors, collectors, and readers in equal doses, while at the same time maintaining a good on-time shipping record. Print runs on all of its titles grew dramatically throughout the first half of the year, as all three of these comic-buying constituencies tried to make up for lost time on their Valiant collections. (Early Valiants were in notoriously short supply in '92, driving back issue prices through the roof. See below for more details on the 1993 back issue market.) The Valiant frenzy reached its peak early this summer with the release of *Turok* #1, which had a print run of roughly 1.5 million.

That book became the center of controversy a few weeks after its release, however. Disgruntled retailers, disappointed with the book's performance during a summer when investors' dollars were stretched to the limit, complained that *Turok* did not have the full chromium cover which had been advertised. Valiant assuaged retailer irritation by offering a Gold Logo *Turok* #1 in exchange for every 35 regular *Turok* #1s returned by retailers.

Tribe ™ & © Larry Stroman & Todd Johnson. *Prime* ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc. *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* ™ & © Paramount Pictures.

Rai ™ & © Voyager Entertainment, Inc.

Valiant's success has helped fuel the "superhero comeback" among other publishers.

Valiant successfully continued its popular gold logo program with several other releases this year. The program is designed to reward readers and retailers who promote Valiant with a special "gold logo" limited edition of one their regular releases. With print runs of only 5,000, these gold logo books often attain a high resale value on the secondary market. Gold logo releases in '93 included *Turok* #1, *Rai and the Future Force* #9, *X-O Manowar* #0, *Magnus* #21, and *The Second Life of Dr. Mirage* #1.

During the height of the superhero hysteria this summer, Valiant continued its tactic of slipping important first appearances into its regular books without any prior indication, much to the frustration of die-hard collectors. Both *Bloodshot* #6 and *Shadowman* #16 hit the stands before anyone knew that they contained the first appearances of Ninjak and Doctor Mirage respectively. The resulting feeding frenzy among speculators and collectors has caused those two factions to keep a watchful eye on new Valiant comics, no matter how innocent-seeming they may be.

Defiant made a big splash with its first title, *Warriors of Plasm*. Can Jim Shooter's new company compete? We'll see.

Warriors of Plasm and Defiant logo ™ & © Enlightened Entertainment Partners, L.P.

A New Beginning: Defiant

Defiant has been one of the most closely watched new publishers of the year, and with good reason. Jim Shooter is a 28-year veteran of the comic industry who began writing for DC at the age of 13. He was editor-in-chief of Marvel from 1979 to 1987, and in 1989 formed Voyager Communications with partner Steve Massarsky. Though his exact role in the industry has been a subject of debate this summer, it's indisputable that he has the experience and knowledge to get a comic publishing company up and running. After parting ways with Valiant in 1992, Shooter came back with a vengeance this year with his new company, Defiant.

Never a stranger to controversy, Shooter's first offering from Defiant was probably the most volatile comic-related product of the year. Issue #0 of Defiant's flagship title, originally known as *Plasm*, was offered in the form of a binder and a set of trading cards. The card set had to be assembled like any normal card set: namely, packets or boxes of randomly packed common and rare "chase" cards had to be purchased and collated into a set. When placed into the card binder (which came packed with the final card of the set), the resultant product became the *Plasm* #0 issue, which initially carried roughly a $50 retail value. What's worse, first-print binders were severely allocated (to about 1/6 of orders), and secondary market prices reached the $100 mark virtually overnight. Second prints of the binder were released in a timely fashion, but after the product had become the center of attention in the comic industry.

Hype and controversy aside, *Plasm* has been a solid series editorially, but the binder fiasco was only the beginning of Defiant's problems with the book. Marvel Comics threatened legal action over Defiant's use of the title, claiming that it had shown intent to publish a similar title, *Plasmer*, in August of 1992. Viewing the problem as minor, Shooter and Defiant relented and changed the title to *Warriors of Plasm*. That change wasn't enough for Marvel, and the matter went before a court of law. Defiant recently won a small reprieve in the ongoing legal battle when a judge ruled that Defiant could continue to publish *Warriors of Plasm* until the court issued a final ruling (see Wizard News, page 27). Unfortunately for Defiant, all the controversy surrounding the title has obscured the fine work of the company's premiere artist, David Lapham. In the meantime, Defiant intends to continue publishing its unique brand of sequential art in both comic book and trading card form with several other titles, including the forthcoming *Dark Dominion*.

Taking the Plunge: Dark Horse

Dark Horse Comics gambled more than any other publisher in 1993. The seven-year-old comic company, heretofore known for high-quality creator-owned projects and licensed projects, decided to take the plunge into the superhero section of an already crowded market. Only a foolhardy publisher would have done such a thing without solid marketing or solid production.

Fortunately, Dark Horse had both. The company captured readers in 1993 with its "16 books for 16 bucks" Comics' Greatest World promotion. Each weekly installment of the 16-week saga introduced readers to the Comics' Greatest World universe and some of the residents therein. With such a low price point, new readers could easily afford to try out all 16 books in a marketplace crowded with $5.95 cover-priced items. Using a method that has quickly become commonplace in the industry (witness Malibu's Ultraverse), Dark Horse contracted some of the most celebrated creators in the field to design the universe and its characters. Many characters and groups first encountered in the CGW mini-series have received or will receive mini-series of their own, the first of these being the mysterious Vortex.

But Dark Horse hasn't forgotten how they got where they are today. The company had plenty of licensed projects on

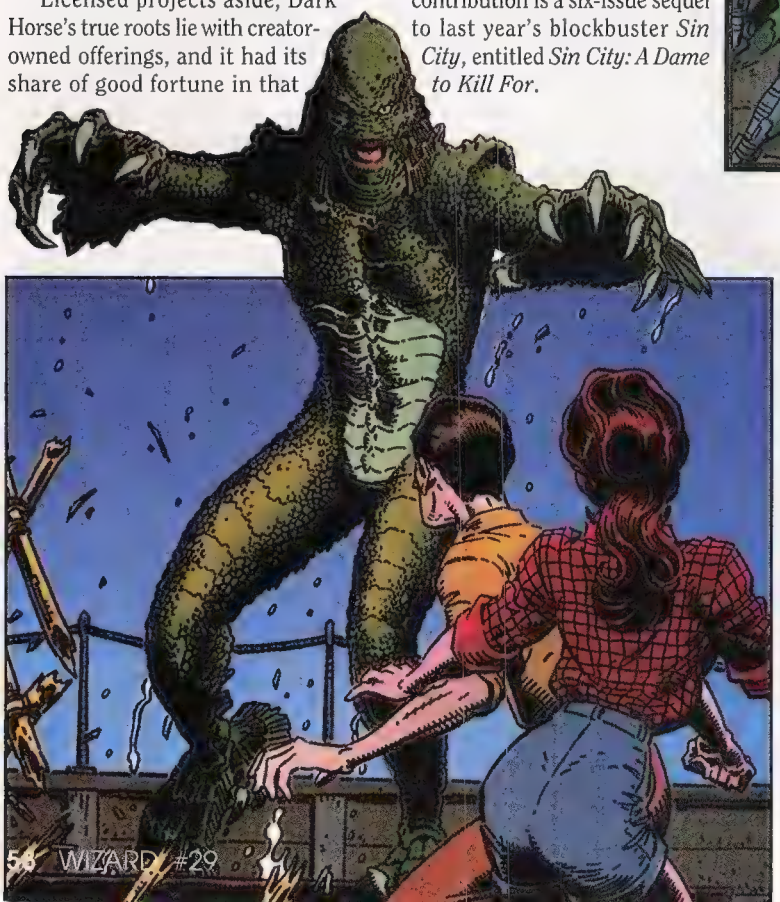
Dark Horse reaped the rewards of Comics' Greatest World, surprise successes such as *Grendel: War Child* (right), and its mainstay, license titles such as *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (bottom).

GRENDEL ™ & © MATT WAGNER. X AND COMICS' GREATEST WORLD ™ & © DARK HORSE COMICS.

tap in 1993. It followed up last year's wildly successful *Star Wars: Dark Empire* with *Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi*, serialized in the company's color anthology title, *Dark Horse Comics*. A *Tales of the Jedi* mini-series saw release late in '93, and with anticipation of a fourth *Star Wars* movie running high among science fiction aficionados, *Star Wars* will no doubt continue to be one of the most prized comics licenses in the industry. In addition to its successful lineup of Predator, Aliens, and RoboCop comics, Dark Horse has recently added a mini-imprint of Universal Monsters comics, including classics such as Frankenstein, Dracula, and the Creature from the Black Lagoon.

Licensed projects aside, Dark Horse's true roots lie with creator-owned offerings, and it had its share of good fortune in that realm as well last year. Not only did *John Byrne's Next Men* and Paul Chadwick's various *Concrete* mini-series continue to prosper, but Matt Wagner's *Grendel: War Child* turned out to be one of the most successful projects of the year. The mini-series concluded early in 1993 and was followed up by the anthology book *Grendel Tales*.

Even more exciting, Dark Horse will be the home of the creator-owned Legend imprint. The Legend group, which includes Byrne, Chadwick, Miller, Art Adams, Gibbons, Mignola, and Geof Darrow, was formed not to create a shared universe but to reflect a shared set of sensibilities. Byrne's *Next Men* has moved under the Legend umbrella, and has swithched from a regular series to a sequence of mini-series. Frank Miller's first contribution is a six-issue sequel to last year's blockbuster *Sin City*, entitled *Sin City: A Dame to Kill For*.



CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON ™ & © UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS, INC.

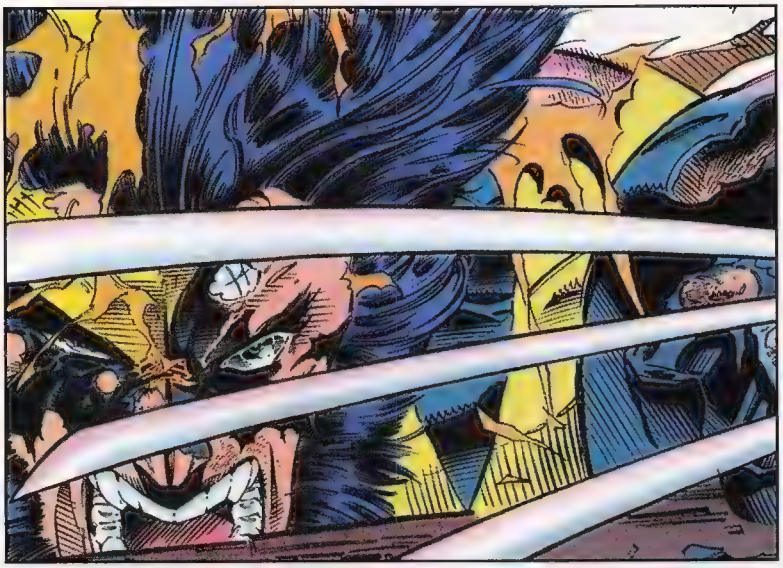
Waiting and Watching: Marvel

Marvel, which suffered losses in both market share and general popularity this year, took those setbacks in stride. It seems to be waging its wars on Wall Street rather than in comic shops these days. The company, which recently acquired card maker Fleer, further expanded its entertainment empire by adding popular toy maker Toy Biz to its list of assets. Marvel also made headlines by entering into an agreement with licensing giant Shogakukan Productions in Japan, and has spun Marvel UK off into its own publishing company. Furthermore, the company's stock has repeatedly made the pages of newspaper business sections thanks to its excellent performance. That's a lot of behind-the-scenes maneuvering, which should come as no surprise, since Marvel CEO Terry Stewart comes from a background in mergers and acquisitions.

DAREDEVIL, DOCTOR DOOM, MAGNETO, AND WOLVERINE ™ & © MARVEL COMICS.

Marvel enjoyed the resurgence of Daredevil (above), and sent plotlines reeling by finishing off major players such as Dr. Doom and Magneto.

But what has Marvel done in comics in '93? Their mutant titles, including *X-Men*, *Uncanny X-Men*, *X-Force*, and *X-Factor*, showed typically strong sales throughout the year. This year's mutant crossover, "The X-Cutioner's Song," was as successful as expected, but having to interrupt regular storylines to accommodate crossovers has taken its toll on at least one Marvel creator. Writer Peter



Wolverine went through the wringer in 1993.

David resigned from *X-Factor* this year, citing his reluctance to sacrifice time in his regular storylines for the annual X-over festivities. The popular writer remained at the reins of several other Marvel projects (see below).

The company has been celebrating the 30th anniversary of the X-Men throughout the year in a storyline which brought back the mutants' oldest and best foe, Magneto, entitled "Fatal Attractions." The conflict culminated in six hologram-covered books (*X-Factor* #92, *X-Force* #25, *Uncanny X-Men* #304, *X-Men* #25, *Wolverine* #75, and *Excalibur* #71), which included quite a few shocks for X-fans. Longtime team member Colossus joined forces with Magneto after the death of his sister, the popular mutant Illyana. Magneto himself was "mind-wiped" by Professor Xavier at the climax of the tale, but not before he had removed the supposedly unbreakable adamantium from Wolverine's skeleton, leaving Wolverine in critical condition in the process.

Reed Richards of the Fantastic Four and the FF's greatest nemesis, Doctor Doom, apparently both bit the dust in *Fantastic Four* #381 this year. Richards and his teammates inaugurated the present-day Marvel Universe in 1961, and during the group's heyday, *Fantastic Four* was Marvel's flagship title, featuring the debut of literally dozens of characters. After Doom's introduction in *Fantastic Four* #5, he quickly became the most popular and prolific Marvel villain of the Silver Age.

Despite the loss of its two most popular villains this year, not all changes in the Marvel universe have been negative for '93. Daredevil returned to fan-favorite status this summer with the popular "Fall from Grace" storyline (beginning in *Daredevil* #319), which featured both a costume change for Daredevil and the return of his former love interest, Elektra, who is a popular character in her own right.

Hitting the Big Time: Kitchen Sink Press

Kitchen Sink Press shocked the industry in 1993 when it acquired Tundra Publishing, a haven for alternative creator-owned titles. Kitchen Sink itself has been publishing alternative titles throughout its 20-year history. The merger gives the company the right to publish work by popular artists and writers such as Simon Bisley, Alan Moore, and Jim O'Barr.

It's been a good year all around for KSP, because one of its most popular and critically acclaimed titles, Mark Schultz's *Cadillacs & Dinosaurs*, debuted as a cartoon on CBS this fall.

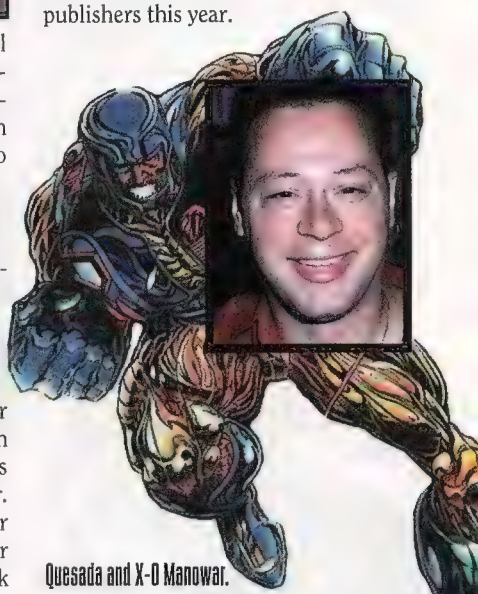
Publisher War Zone: The Best of the Rest

Several other publishers made their mark (or tried to) in 1993. Harris Comics continued to publish its popular *Vampirella* title sporadically, while making their bid in the superhero sweepstakes with the publication of *Cain* and *Q-Unit*. Continuity made a comeback bid with its massive *Deathwatch 2000* crossover, but has faced a variety of production problems. They've been hurt most recently by Todd McFarlane's departure from *Valeria, the She-Bat* #3 and #4, which were to feature him and Neal Adams collaborating on a storyline spotlighting McFarlane's popular character Spawn.

Topps Comics followed up last year's successful *Dracula* movie adaptation with the equally successful *Jurassic Park* mini-series. Topps also signed veteran comics creator Jack Kirby to oversee the creation of their new superhero line. Triumphant Comics started a superhero line dubbed "The Collector's Universe." Lightning Comics, Dagger Comics, and Majestic added their names to the continually growing roster of superhero publishers during the year as well.

Creators of the Year

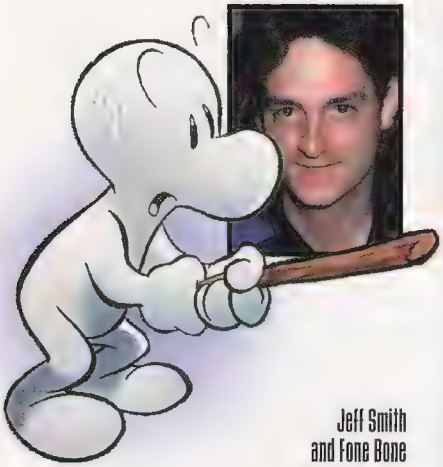
Though the year has been dominated by publisher-oriented news, 1993 also saw its share of success stories on a personal level. The increasing competition among publishers to procure top-flight talent has made for a few rags-to-riches stories this year. Likewise, the emphasis on superheroes by most major publishers has created openings for quality creator-owned projects from smaller publishers this year.



Quesada and X-O Manowar.

Joe Quesada: Joe's rapid rise to the top is a classic case of having the right art style in the right place at the right time. After a critically acclaimed but commercially unsuccessful stint on *The Ray* for DC, Quesada went on to do the *Sword of Azrael* mini-series, also for DC. *Sword* didn't garner him much attention at the time, but it got a second look this year when it was learned that Azrael would become the new Batman. After designing a new costume for the new Batman, Quesada spent much of the year at Marvel on *X-Factor*. His work there brought him to the attention of Valiant, which was searching for another superstar artist after losing Barry Windsor-Smith earlier in the year. Quesada is now working exclusively for Valiant on a number of high profile projects, including its new *Ninjak* series.

Jeff Smith: *Bone* has become the most talked-about black-and-white comic in the industry this year. After a slow start, a show of support from his



Jeff Smith and Fone Bone

BONE™ & © JEFF SMITH.

peers caused the industry press to take notice of the series, and attention snowballed from there for Smith and his publishing company, Cartoon Books. Likened to work by comics legends Will Eisner and Walt Kelly, Smith's *Bone* has a broad, undeniable appeal, and the series seems destined for success as Disney prepares to serialize Bone's exploits in the pages of *Disney Adventure Digest*. Smith's work on *Bone* earned him both the Inkpot and Eisner awards this year.

Mike Allred and Madman

MADMAN™ & © MICHAEL D. ALLRED.

Michael Allred: Allred's quirky, unique style, which works well in both black-and-white and color, captured the attention of fans looking for something unusual. *Madman* and *Madman Adventures* slowly built a following over the course of the year, and Allred has garnered the attention of other publishers—notably DC, where he has done *Vertigo Visions: The Geek* and *Sandman* #54.

Alan Moore: Moore made his long-awaited return to American mainstream comics this year after a self-imposed absence of about five years. After doing critically acclaimed work for DC in the mid-'80s, Moore became disgruntled with the industry and mostly confined himself to alternative titles. Moore returned to superheroes this year with *Spawn* #8, and went on to do the *1963* mini-series, both for Image. Moore must have gotten along in the mainstream all right this year, because he and artist Bart Sears will be doing a Violator mini-series for Todd McFarlane in early '94.

Neil Gaiman: Gaiman (shown at right), who has established himself as the premiere writer in the business over the past three years, continued to attract attention with his ground-breaking *Sandman* series, and with the incredibly popular three-issue *Death: The High Cost of Living* mini-series.

Peter David: Along with Gaiman, Peter David (inset below) has succeeded in making popular writers a bankable commodity over the past year. David's *Spider-Man 2099* has been a strong seller this year, as has his work on *Hulk*, *Hulk: Future Imperfect*, *X-Factor*, and others. David has become known as the best straight superhero writer in the business, and his *Aquaman: Time & Tide* from DC is eagerly anticipated.

Year of Marketing Mayhem

Comics have made giant strides toward becoming a true entertainment industry this year, and nowhere is that more apparent than in the marketing segment of the business. From cover gimmicks to bus stops to billboards, comics have been more in-your-face in 1993 than ever before.

Comics in the Media: After the death of Superman paved the way late last year, comics continued to make news in a variety of media in 1993, including newspapers, magazines, and TV talk shows. Superman's return and Batman's injury were the big winners in this department for the year. Both *Adventures of Superman* #500 and *Superman* #82 got media coverage as Superman returned to the land of the living. *Batman* #497, the issue in which Batman received his spinal injury, also got major coverage. The introduction of Milestone Media and ANIA this summer (see below) also received widespread newspaper and magazine coverage.

Image co-founder Rob Liefeld received coverage of a different sort. After being featured in a commercial for Levi's blue jeans last year, Liefeld was named one of the entertainment industry's 25 most promising "up and comers" in *Entertainment Weekly*. Liefeld reportedly has a project called *Doom's IV* in development with Steven Spielberg's movie production company, Amblin Entertainment. However, Liefeld's future seems uncertain, since he announced his leave of absence from Extreme Studios earlier this year.

Cover Enhancements: The controversy over cover enhancements reached a fever pitch in 1993 as more comics than ever before touted shiny, pre-bagged, or holographic covers in a variety of permutations. Some of the most popular cover fads of the past year have included chromium covers (*Turok* #1, *X-O Manowar* #0, *Superman* #82), holograms on covers (*X-Men* #25), bagged comics ("X-Cutioner's Song," the direct sales *Adventures of Superman* #500), and a variety of foils, die-cuts, and embossments.

Due to the high cost of some gimmicks and a feeling that they were overused, publishers began feeling a backlash from consumers late this year. The general consensus is that fans will be seeing fewer enhancements in '94.

Premium Promotions: Special limited editions of regular books continued to proliferate in 1993. Aside from the previously mentioned Valiant gold logo books,

PRIME™ & © MALIBU COMICS ENTERTAINMENT, INC. ALL PHOTOS BY AL ORTEGA.

1993 was the year of cover enhancements, polybags, and #0 comic books.

UNION™ & © AEGIS ENTERTAINMENT.

Malibu, Dark Horse, DC, and Image all got into the business of making low-print-run special books as either ordering incentives for retailers or premiums for fans.

Some of the most impressive promotions this year have been the Ultraverse first issue hologram books, the entire covers of which are giant holograms. DC followed up last year's popular platinum edition of *Superman* #75 with a platinum *Adventures of Superman* #500 this year, and also released platinum editions of such milestone books as *Sandman* #50, *Black Orchid* #1, and *Batman* #492. Dark Horse produced platinum editions of *X*, the first Comics' Greatest World book, as well as collections of each of the four monthly legs of the 16-part series. Marvel, which started the premium book craze in 1990 with the release of its platinum *Spider-Man* #1, was surprisingly quiet on the premium book front this year, producing only a gold edition of *Venom* #1. Interestingly, an error during the print run of *Venom* #1 accidentally produced the most sought-after premium book of the year, the black *Venom* #1. The book is simply a normal *Venom* #1 on which the foil coating did not stick. There are about 500 to 800 of these in existence.

Couponing and #0s: The practice of making a comic available only through a special coupon redemption or similar program, made notorious by Image and Valiant last year, continued in 1993 to a lesser extent. Malibu held this promotion for both Ultraverse and *Rune*, making special zero issues available to consumers who collect coupons.

Marvel produced its first zero issue ever in conjunction with the X-Men 30th anniversary celebration: *Magneto* #0 was available only to consumers who bought selected Marvel books. Zero issues established themselves as a tradition this year, and are almost always associated with an origin story. The books are usually, but not always, identified with the practice of couponing. Books like *X-O Manowar* #0 and *Cyberforce* #0 were available for sale through normal channels, while *WildC.A.T.s* #0 was available with the *WildC.A.T.s* trade paperback.

Trade Shows: Attendance at major conventions was up once again in 1993. Major shows in Chicago, San Diego, Atlanta, and Philadelphia all experienced record turnouts. Appropriately, publishers upped the ante as well, beefing up their displays on the show floor. In San Diego, DC unveiled its new booth, which features giant DC bullets, dozens of video screens, and a huge infrastructure of crossbeams that brings Gotham City to mind.

While no other publisher was able to match DC's awesome presence, everyone else did put extra care to make sure they looked as professional as possible. Valiant had a giant X-O and Shadowman suspended above its booth, while Image had a statue of the Violator amidst their virtual city of different studios. Everyone who attended was bombarded with promotional material from all sides. It was impossible to walk anywhere without seeing legions of fans proudly displaying their Rune tattoos or signed Vampirella posters. The publishers also continued to have costumed characters roaming the show floor. From Vampirella and Mantra to Death's Head and Badrock, the fans gathered by the droves to meet live superheroes.

Demographics: Two publishers began major efforts to market specifically to black comic book readers in 1993. Milestone Media was founded by Dwayne McDuffie, Denys Cowan, Derek Dingle, and Michael Davis to produce comics about black superheroes. Milestone currently has a deal with DC to distribute their books. ANIA—the word comes from an African language and means "to protect and defend"—was formed by the Association of Black Comic Book Publishers. By banding together, the group hopes to garner more exposure than they could as individuals.

DC upped the ante at trade shows this year by unveiling this impressive booth.

Publishers such as Milestone Media reached for specific audiences like black comic readers.

Movies and Television: Turning comic pages into moving pictures continues to be a hit-or-miss proposition for the industry. The biggest success story of the year in this area is the *Batman: The Animated Series* TV show. The show is a rarity for a comic-to-television

crossover: it's both a critical and a popular success. Even *The Batman Adventures* comic book, based on the show, has done well for DC. A full-length theatrical installment should be in theaters as you read this. Mark Schultz's *Cadillacs & Dinosaurs*, on CBS, features top-notch animation and scripts.

***Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman* has been an early success for ABC.**

CLARK KENT AND LOIS LANE ™ & © DC COMICS. PHOTOS COURTESY CAPITAL CITIES/ABC, INC.

The *X-Men* animated show and comic book have done well for Marvel, though purists don't like the deviations the cartoon makes from the original comic. Unfortunately, that's the best Marvel has been able to do in this arena in 1993. Marvel has fallen into a tradition of unsuccessful film productions, and this past year has been no exception. The long-awaited Spider-Man film from James Cameron has gone through another series of delays, and best guesses now target the project for a 1995 release. Marvel's best hope for the year has been a Fantastic Four film produced by low-budget schlock-meister Roger Corman, though it too has suffered continual delays throughout the year, and, at press time, is scheduled for a December 31 debut.

On a more positive note, *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman* debuted last September on the ABC network to much critical acclaim. The show is a weird hybrid of the *Flash* and *Moonlighting* TV shows, combining the flirtatious character interaction popular on TV with the action that superhero fans love. The series intends to remain fairly faithful to the comic, and supporting characters such as Catherine Grant, Jimmy Olsen, and Perry White are regulars. As for villains, Lex Luthor has already appeared, and future plans include several more of Superman's comic book villains, such as Bizarro.

As usual, a variety of exciting projects were announced during the year. Sylvester Stallone, on the comeback trail this year with successes in *Cliffhanger* and *Demolition Man*, will be starring in a Judge Dredd film. Since DC picked up the American rights to Judge Dredd earlier this year, its future in film looks to be a bright one. Names such as Stallone's and Arnold Schwarzenegger's have been mentioned in connection with a forthcoming Sgt. Rock film. Although it was announced that Michelle Pfeiffer won't be reprising her role as Catwoman in the upcoming *Batman 3* movie, it appears there is a strong possibility that she'll be starring in a Catwoman movie of her own.

Trading Cards: The comic-related card industry reached a sort of maturation in 1993. In past years, virtually all a company had to do to make a product successful was bring it to market. This year, however, a number of major players from the sports card business, looking to cash in on this rapidly expanding segment of the market, entered the field, making the business quite competitive. Marvel made big news in 1992 with their acquisition of Fleer, but then shocked the industry by not using the company to produce a Marvel product this year. SkyBox, which rose to fame in recent years on the strength of its Marvel product—the license lapses next year, when Fleer is scheduled to begin producing its first Marvel cards—went out with a bang in '93. Marvel Universe 4, X-Men 2, and Marvel Masterpieces 2 were among the strongest-selling card products of the year.

Many publishers began using card sets in support of or in conjunction with special storylines in their comics. DC commemorated the return of Superman with a card set from SkyBox this year, and of course, Defiant prefaced their *Plasm* comic book with a card set (see above), and plans to do so again with other titles. The Valiant/Image crossover *Deathmate* was supported by a unique card set collaboration between Pyramid and Topps.

The briefest trend of the year had to be the POG craze. Anticipation for the small round cardboard collectibles was whipped into a frenzy as many major card manufacturers geared up for production. But by the time the first products reached the market—with items ranging from Spogz to DC Knightfall SkyCaps—the excitement died down, as thousands of collectors, retailers, and manufacturers simultaneously came to their senses.

The Year in Back Issues

Valiant books were the industry's back issue monsters at the beginning of the year. Comics like *Magnus* #12 (the first Valiant appearance of Turok) and *Harbinger* #1 set record prices for recent comics. Other key Valiant issues materialized and appreciated throughout the year, including *Shadowman* #8 (first Master Darque), *Shadowman* #16 (first Dr. Mirage), and *Eternal Warrior* #4 (first Bloodshot). Books like *Rai* #3 and #4 and *Harbinger* #5 also became hot due to small print runs.

After the POG "non-craze," many manufacturers were left feeling foolish.

Investors continued to show interest in comic print runs. Valiant went so far as to publish a list of their 20 rarest issues. Other comics with small print runs such as *Bone* #1 and *Cry For Dawn* #1 became in demand as collectors realized their relative scarcity. This mentality has also driven the market for premium books like the Valiant gold logo books, DC platinum books, and Ultraverse hologram books throughout the year, which are sought after mainly because of their limited edition nature. Most items of this kind have print runs in the 5,000 to 10,000 range.

In a similar development, second and third issues of many new series also appreciated in 1993. This occurred because most retailers order first issues of a new series very heavily, and reduce orders for subsequent issues. If the series becomes popular, issues #2 and #3 are often in short supply. The best example

ALL SPOGZ, SKYCAPS, KNIGHTCAPS, AND LITTLE CARDBOARD CIRCLES ™ & © THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS.

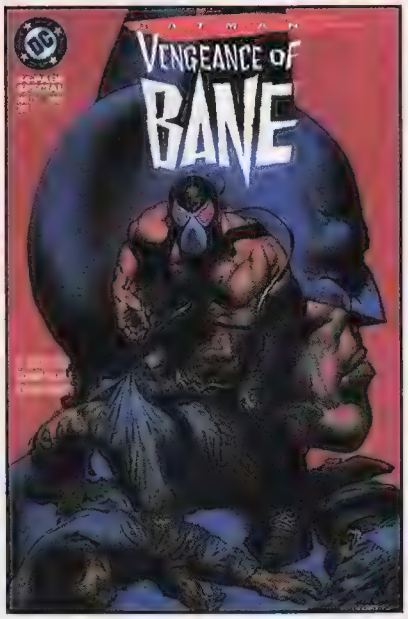
of the trend in '93 was *Spawn* #2 and #3, which both appreciated dramatically during the year. Ultraverse second issues have experienced the same phenomenon, with *Prime* #2 and *Hardcase* #2 being the toughest to find.

Unsurprisingly, the interest in Superman and Batman has caused an interest in their recent back issues as well. A wide variety of "Knightfall"-related books became hot when news of the "changing of the guard" surfaced. *Sword of Azrael* and *Vengeance of Bane* in particular became increasingly difficult to obtain; DC eventually did a second printing to satisfy demand. Bane and Azrael also made early appearances in *Detective* #655-#658, and those issues, along with the "Knightfall" prequel issues in *Batman* #488-#491, became very hot.

Superman back issues from the past four years became collectible this year due to a variety of tie-ins with recent storylines. The Cyborg Superman turned out to be Hank Henshaw, whom Superman first encountered in *Adventures of Superman* #466 and #468. The Last Son of Krypton, to no one's surprise, was the Krypton Man, a.k.a. the Eradicator. His early appearances in *Action Comics Annual* #2, *Adventures of Superman* #455, and *Superman: The Man of Steel* #1 became highly desirable. As soon as it became apparent that Doomsday had survived his conflict with Superman, the relatively hard-to-get Doomsday cameo appearances in *Man of Steel* #17, *Action* #683, *Adventures of Superman* #496, and *Superman* #73 became highly sought after as well.

The increasing desirability of cameo issues in general was another strong trend throughout 1993. Aside from the Doomsday cameos, other cameo first appearances like *Bloodshot* #6 (first Ninjak) became more and more desirable than the full-blown first appearance of the character. Retailers are often tipped off in advance about the first appearances of major new characters, and therefore can adjust their orders accordingly, but when that character makes a cameo in the previous issue, they are often caught off-guard. This trend has even spread to older books: there's been a particularly noticeable surge in demand for *Incredible Hulk* #180, Wolverine's cameo first appearance.

X-Men back issues were particularly collectible this year, due to their 30th anniversary. First appearances of a variety of X-Men-related characters have been receiving renewed interest. Silver Age to present, no series has been hotter in 1993 than *Uncanny X-Men*. Issue #12, featuring the first Juggernaut, #28, with the first Banshee, and #54, with the first Alex Summers, have been hot Silver Age issues, and more recent numbers like #266 (first Gambit) and #282 (first Bishop) also became very desirable this year. Sabretooth has become a much hotter character lately, with his new series becoming a hit, and his back issues have been in demand as well. Rumors that he will be joining the X-Men next year served to attract even more attention to issues like *Iron Fist* #14 (his first appearance) and *Uncanny X-Men* #212 and #213.



A sleeper on the shelf when released, *Vengeance of Bane* went on to become a back issue barnburner!

BATMAN: VENGEANCE OF BANE™ & © DC COMICS.

Venom was another character who received widespread attention during the year, and his first appearance in *Amazing Spider-Man* #300 has been one of the biggest movers of the past few months. Other early Venom appearances, such as *Amazing Spider-Man* #315 and #316, have also been in demand. Venom's offspring, Carnage, has become a popular character in his own right thanks to the successful "Maximum Carnage" crossover, and his first appearance in *Amazing Spider-Man* #361 and host-body Cletus Kasady's first appearance in *Amazing Spider-Man* #344 have also sold well in '93.

Vintage back issues fetched record prices throughout 1993. Perhaps the most startling event in the back issue world this year was the sale of a high-grade copy of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 (the first appearance of Spider-Man) for $40,000 at Sotheby's. That set a new high-water mark for a Silver Age comic, in financial territory normally reserved for Golden Age books. Spider-Man seems to have taken his place as comics' third most important character (behind Superman and Batman) in the minds of most comic historians, and *Amazing Fantasy* #15 appears to have toppled *Showcase* #4 for the title of most desirable Silver Age book. At that same Sotheby's auction, a copy of *Tales of Suspense* #39 (the first Iron Man) attracted $4,000, which raised a few eyebrows.

Other big Silver Age movers in '93 include *Hulk* #1, *House of Secrets* #92 (the first Swamp Thing), and *Amazing Spider-Man* #101 (first Morbius). Golden Age comics seemed to experience a resurgence this year, due to the increasing cost of Silver Age books. Many Golden Age books are beginning to look like bargains compared to some of the record Silver Age prices that have been posted recently. *Adventure Comics* #40 (first Sandman), *All American* #16 (first Green Lantern), and *Captain America* #1 were all particularly sought after by collectors this year. (For more information on the 1993 market, see Market Watch, beginning on page 218.)

The Year Remembered

1993 may be remembered as the year comics became more of an industry than a hobby. Comic news and gossip this year was dominated by word of mergers, acquisitions, and takeovers. 1992's biggest story—that of the formation of Image by seven former Marvel artists—obviously faded into memory as the reports of major creative talent changing allegiances and garnering large dollar contracts proliferated.

Comic books have also been getting an increasing amount of media coverage, particularly in newspapers and magazines, and the film industry seems to be eyeing comics hungrily for the next hot property. Furthermore, several publishers held formal discussions this year on the creation of a comic book ad council. All of these events add up to big business: we're clearly in the midst of a comic explosion that rivals the Golden Age.

So can 1994 top '93?

Definitely. The only question is how—and we're about to find out. ☆

William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert are regular contributors to Wizard.

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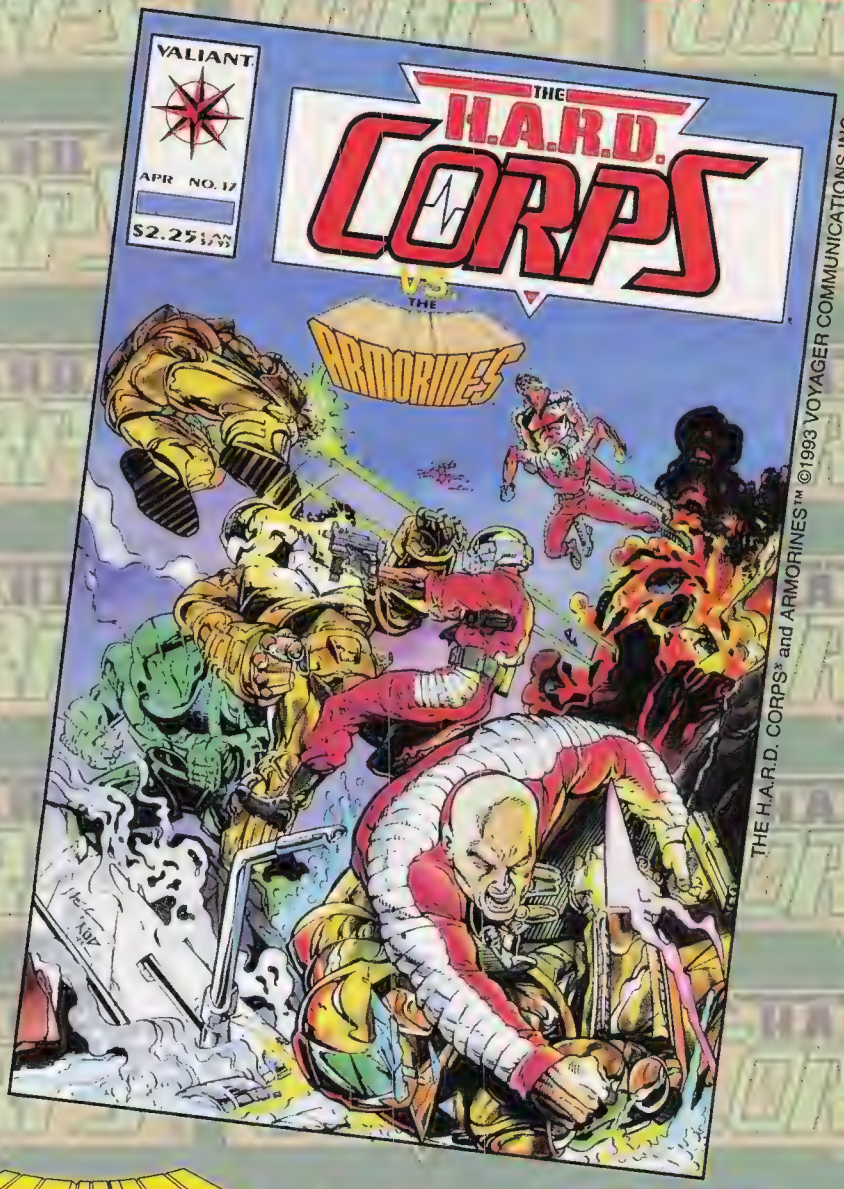

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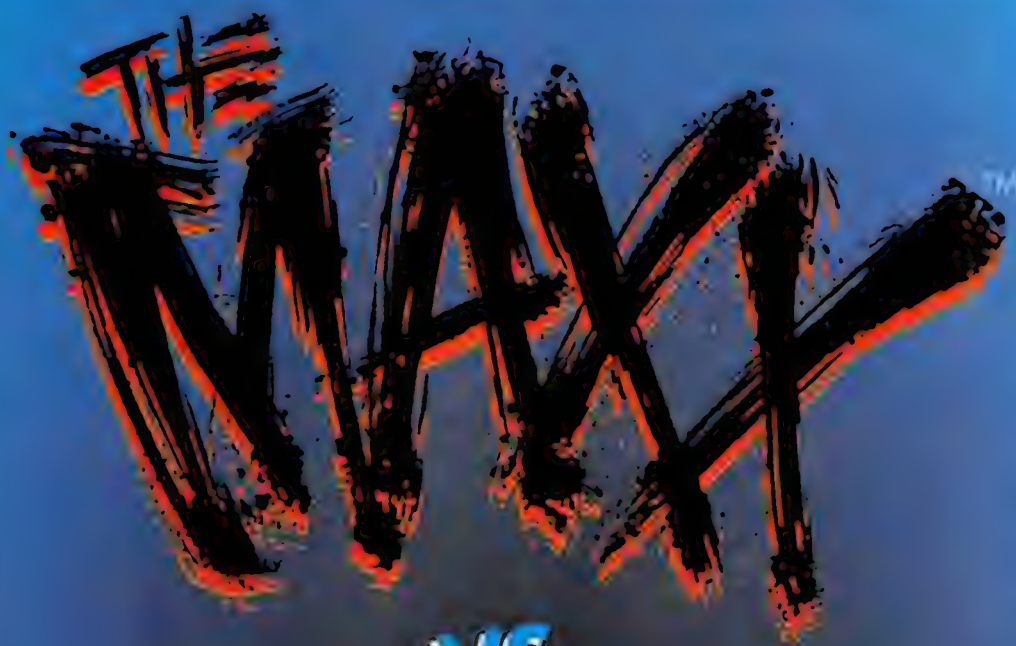

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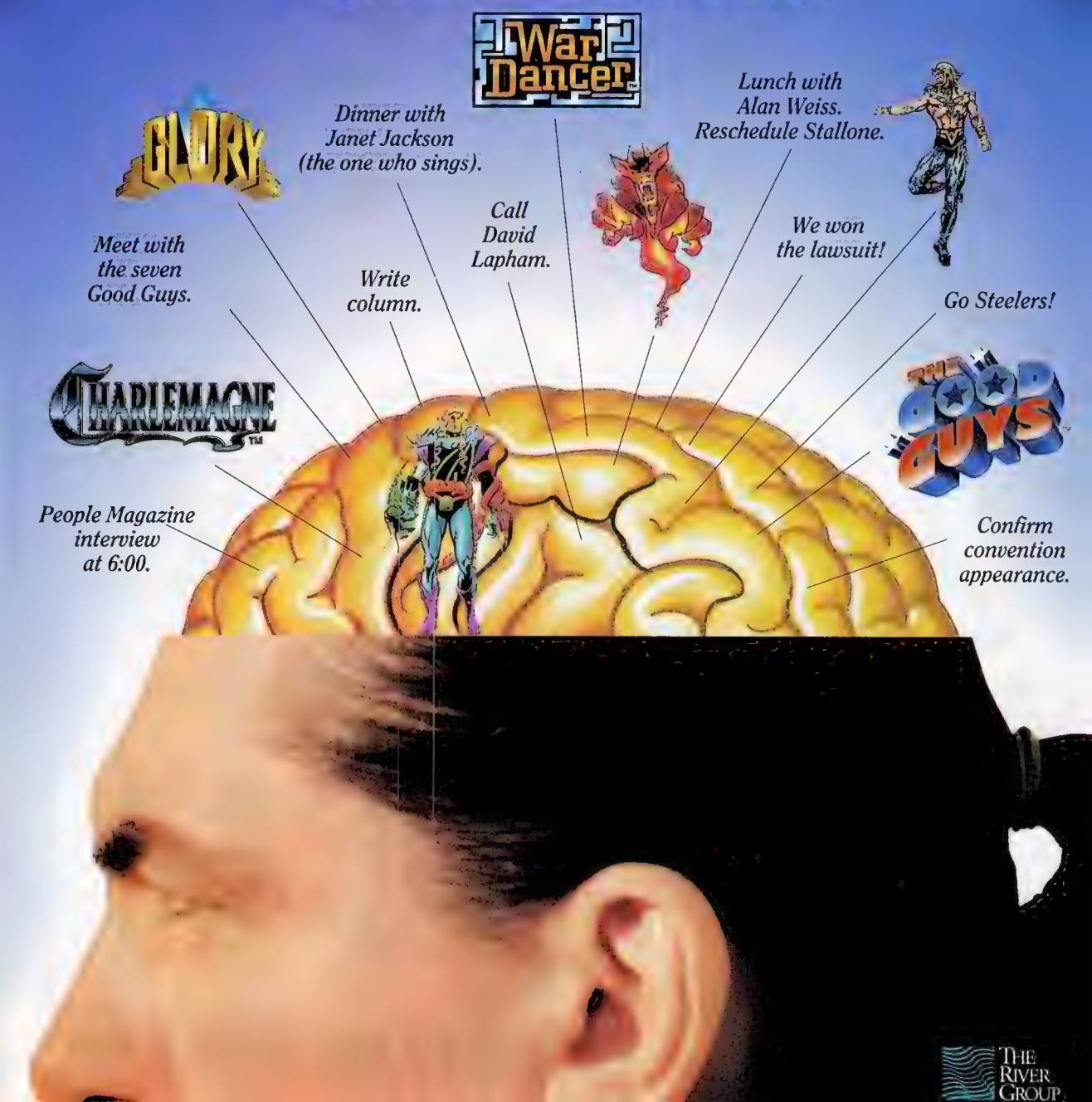

THE RIVER GROUP

SERES 93'

SPAWN AND VIOLATOR™ & © 1993 TODD MCFARLANE

the Drawing board of the Pros

A look back at the early years of *Wizard*, and at the covers that almost were.

Lobo by Erik Larsen

This was originally going to be the cover to *Wizard* #3, but was knocked out of the running by a ferocious Wolverine cover, also by Larsen.

Lobo ™ & © 1993 DC Comics.

She-Hulk by John Byrne

First intended to be a *Wizard* cover between issues #6-#9, the time just never seemed right for us to run this piece. The first of several ill-fated She-Hulk covers.

She-Hulk ™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

Joker by Bart Sears

This is a fantastic piece of art, but at the time this was going to be used (somewhere between our seventh and ninth issues), we weren't ready for a cover that didn't have a fully visible character. We needed the "punch" of instant recognizability in those early days.

JOKER ™ & © 1993 DC COMICS.

Green Hornet by Todd Smith

Though this is a really sharp piece of art, and considered for a cover around *Wizard* #9, the Green Hornet wasn't as high a profile character as we needed to draw attention to *Wizard* back then.

Green Hornet and Kato ™ & © 1993 Green Hornet, Inc.

Wonder Woman by Bart Sears

One of the most beautiful Wonder Woman pieces we've ever seen. It was considered for the front of *Wizard* #9, but suffered the same fate as the Green Hornet cover.

WONDER WOMAN ™ & © 1993 DC COMICS.

The Demon by Val Semekis

The Demon is one of our favorite characters here at Wizard, but, like the Green Hornet and Wonder Woman, was bumped by a "hotter" character. This was in the running for a cover between *Wizard*s #9-#12.

DEMON™ & © 1993 DC COMICS.

NEXT MEN ™ & © 1993 JOHN BYRNE.

She-Hulk 1 by Bart Sears

This was all set to be the cover to *Wizard* #15, but was bumped by *Wizard*'s first regular gatefold cover, a WetWorks piece by Whilce Portacio.

She-Hulk ™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

She-Hulk 2 by Bart Sears

Much like the two different Hulk covers on *Wizard* #6, and the two different gatefold flaps on *Wizard* #26, the She-Hulk cover that never was was to have two different covers: Bikini She-Hulk for west coast distribution and Cut-Off Jeans She-Hulk for east coast and worldwide distribution.

She-Hulk™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

Darkhawk by Bart Sears

Originally slated for an issue between *Wizards* #7-#10, Darkhawk's popularity began to dwindle, and we needed covers with more punch.

Darkhawk ™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

Deathlok by Joe Jusko

Pieces like this make it easy to see why Jusko was chosen as favorite painter by the comic fans in the Wizard Fan Awards! Though a top-notch piece of art, this suffered the same fate as the Darkhawk cover. ☆

DEATHLOK ™ & © 1993 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

HIDE THE KEYS,
THEY'VE COME TO TEST DRIVE THE CAR!
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enter to win

THE MELTING POT BISLEY-PAINTED CAMARO

KITCHEN SINK WIZARD MELTING POT CAMARO SWEEPSTAKES

"This custom '69 Camaro, Kevin Eastman's personal hot wheels, will be picked up by some lucky *Wizard* reader.The entire hood is hand-painted by Simon Bisley and Kevin Eastman. Incredible, mind-jolting, original Melting Pot art and a collectible car. Don't miss your chance. This is one bad ride!

The End of
The BEGINNING
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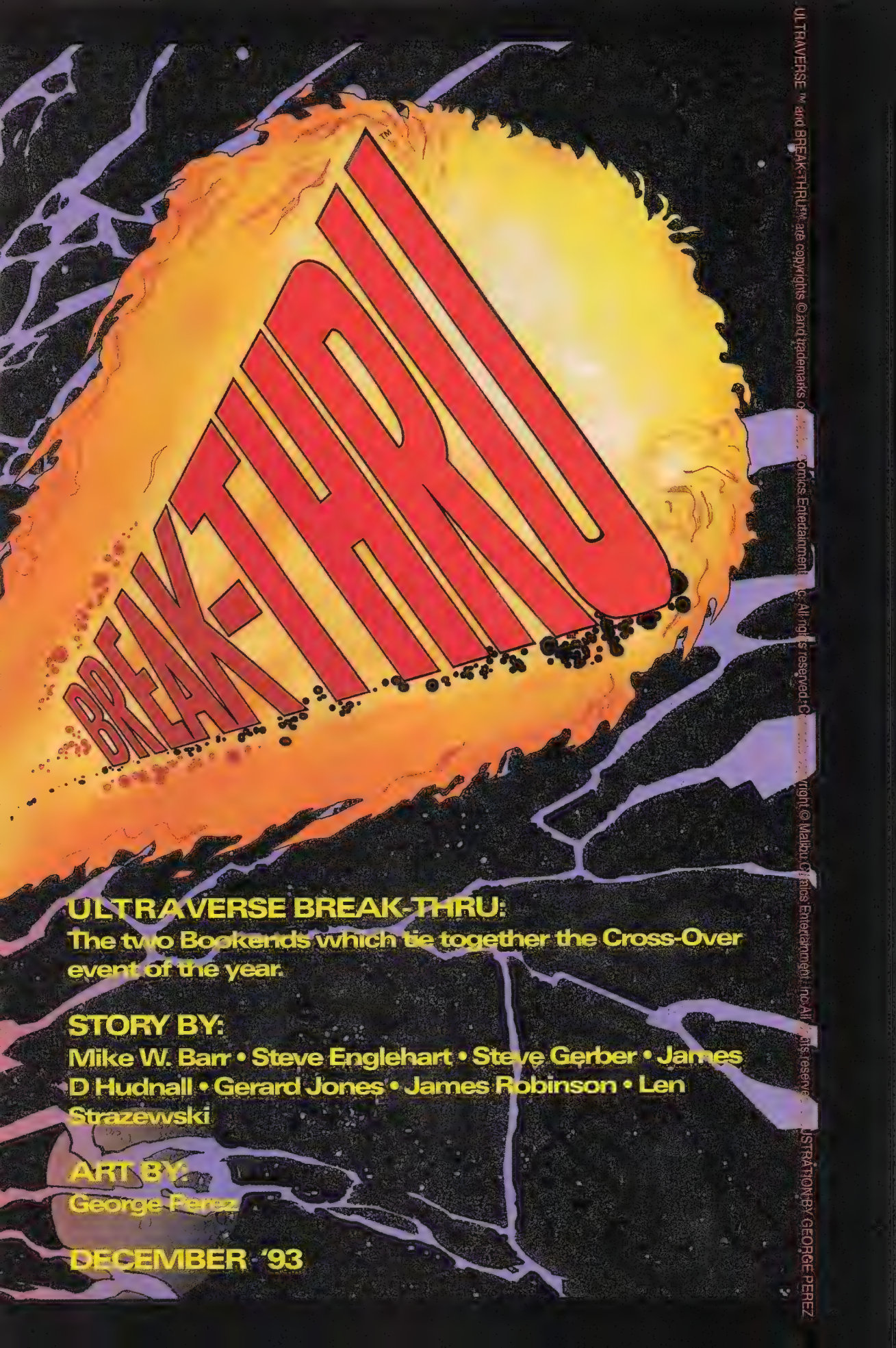
BREAK-THRU™
ULTRAVERSE BREAK-THRU:
The two Bookends which tie together the Cross-Over event of the year.
STORY BY:
Mike W. Barr • Steve Englehart • Steve Gerber • James D Hudnall • Gerard Jones • James Robinson • Len Strazewski
ART BY:
George Perez
DECEMBER '93
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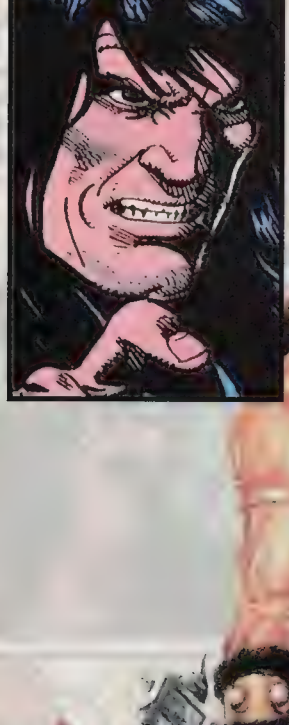
ILLUSTRATION BY GEORGE PEREZ

HUNK & BABE of the year

The moment has arrived! Over the last year or so, *Wizard* has been keeping an eye on the buffest hunks and the hottest babes, picking one character from each category every 30 days to be the Hunk & Babe of the Month. From Magnus to Ripclaw, Vampirella to Mantra, the race to be the the year's top Hunk and Babe was hot and heavy, but only two could claim top honors.

Ladies and gentlemen, *Wizard*'s Hunk & Babe of the Year!

She-Hulk & Wonder Man ™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.



HUNK CONAN

Back when men were men and metal was just a funny word, this Cimmerian came from less-than-humble beginnings and became a king. With the buff bod, more money than Michael Jordan, and a kingdom all his own, not even the Last Action Hero can detract from this hunk's appeal.

Conan the Barbarian ™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

BABE

Catwoman

Any costume that's tight enough to show us whether the belly button of the heroine/villainess is an inny or an outy gets a thumbs up from us. But aside from her obvious physical attributes, what else does Ms. Kyle have going for her? Why, since she's a jewel thief, that means she's a bad girl–and they're a whole lot more fun!

CATWOMAN ™ & © 1993 DC COMICS.

BRUTES & BABES

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS WITH
BART SEARS

Hello, and welcome to another wonderful edition of Brutes & Babes. I hope by this time that all of you talented aspiring artists are hard at work penciling your Batman vs. Man-Bat pages for the second semi-awesome Brutes & Babes contest. I'm really pumped to see what you can do. Finish them up and send them on in. Well, enough blathering about that, let's move on...

This month, we're gonna look at what you and I need to do when you design a character: the different things you have to keep in mind as well as the ways the character's name, look, and costume should flow together as one unified form. (Phew, that was one tough sentence.)

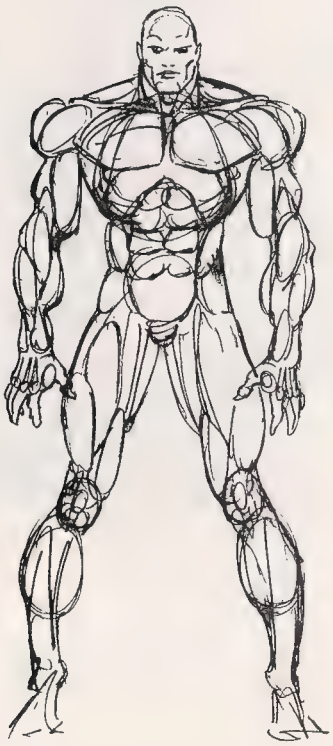
So here I sit, there you sit—nobody's going any further until I type something else. I might as well start with the title.

DESIGNING A SUPERHERO CHARACTER

SECTION 1:

There are several different ways in which you can design a character. Let's talk about the different starting points you can have. Sometimes you might have a detailed written description of a character which is already formed in a writer's mind and/or your mind. Sometimes you might have only a vague idea for a character.

First, we'll look at what you should do when you only have a vague idea for a character. In fact, in this example, all you have is a name—Wolfhound. Say you're working for Dark Horse Comics, and your editor Joe Somebody calls you up and says, "Hey, we need a new villain and we need him tomorrow, and his name is Wolfhound." And you say, "Well, all right, what else?" and he says, "There's nothing else, just give me somebody cool, his name's Wolfhound, he's real tough, he's strange, just go to it." And he hangs up, 'cause he's a busy guy and he's gotta go. You hang up the phone and you sit there and you go, "Oh my God, what am I gonna do?"



SECTION 2:

You have to figure out some way to define a character on the basis of that name. You could draw a wolf and give him man-like legs, and everything would be fine and good, but he wouldn't have much character—it's a little too simplistic.

I think a good way to begin something like this is to start with the basics. Work out a body shape for the character. Is this character going to be big and bulky? short and bulky? tall and thin? tall and muscular? Is he going to be eight heads high? six heads high? five heads high? Is he going to have four arms? two arms? three arms? You need a basic body shape, a basic look, a starting point, a feel for the character, something that's going to start to define his personality and his attitude.

The character's mass can be played with at this stage. Is he going to consist of thick mass or thin mass? That sounds a little strange—I mean, mass is mass, after all. But you can draw a largely muscled, massive humanoid body, throw tracing paper over it, make a few quick cuts and a few deft turns—like pulling in the waist slightly—and create a thinly-massed large character. These are all things you can work out at this stage—it's not a finished character.

Think "Wolfhound." I think of a character who's strong yet sleek. He's not going to be thickly muscled, but he's gonna be powerful-looking. Look at the figure to the left: I went with very broad shoulders (almost inhumanly broad), brought it into a nice tapered waist, and gave him thin muscular legs and long muscular arms—but I pulled in the joints at the wrists and the elbows and the area between the shoulders, the biceps, and the triceps to give him a very different kind of look, an unnatural look. Hey, if he's going to be a villain, we should twist him and play with him a little bit. He hasn't been defined yet—that's what we're doing right now. So let's see where we go from here.

SECTION 3:

All right, we've defined the body shape and mass. The next step in defining a character and look for "Wolfhound" is establishing his posture and bearing: How does this character carry himself? Is he proud and regal—above things or better than things or confident? People with these attitudes all tend to have the same basic bearing and posture, that of the figure to the left.

The second figure has a more skulking, hunkering, slouching look—the look of a character who's stealthy, or at least not concerned with standing tall and being proud. But these are just two of many postures or bearings that a character could take. The first one is often used for the good guy "superhero" type. The second one is almost as frequently used for the bad guy or the cowardly character type.

Which posture fits Wolfhound? It's important to know, because it carries through with whatever movement they're making. The character on the far left would look strong and powerful hailing a cab or talking on the phone. When he's startled, he's not going to cringe away—he's going to get ready for action. He'll be at the forefront of a fight, he'll never back down, he's got a lot of self-confidence and a lot of power and he's proud of it. The character on the right might be cowardly, might be lazy. He's probably going to cringe when he's startled. If there's a fight, he might have to think before entering it. This should give you another piece of the puzzle. I'll opt for the one on the right for Wolfhound. It seems to bring about a more craven, bad guy kind of feel.

SECTION 4:

Now we get into the rough part: the details. Costume details, eye color, hair type and hair color, accouterments... Here you start to define body shape in more detail, as well as posture, bearing, and attitudes. Once this step is done, you'll know almost everything about your character.

You can see here I've printed my finished design for Wolfhound, a character I created and which is being used in the Creator's Universe trading card set from Dynamic Forces. Obviously, this character looks a little different from the body shape drawing on page 88, and a little different from the posture and bearing drawing above. I added all the details necessary to flesh out this character and give him a look and appearance that I was happy with.

I added long stringy hair, which gives him a feral appearance, especially when added to the pointed teeth, deep-set eyes, and slightly pointed ears. I also decided that this character would almost always be drawn in a heavy shadow—hence the large use of blacks. Notice that the blacks in his costume blend in with the blacks of his body. He also has a black design around his chest and shoulders, but it's hidden almost completely by shadow—you can see just a little bit of a point thrusting up on both shoulders. The strange thing coming out of his chest, which is rather bizarre in appearance, adds quite a bit of mystery.

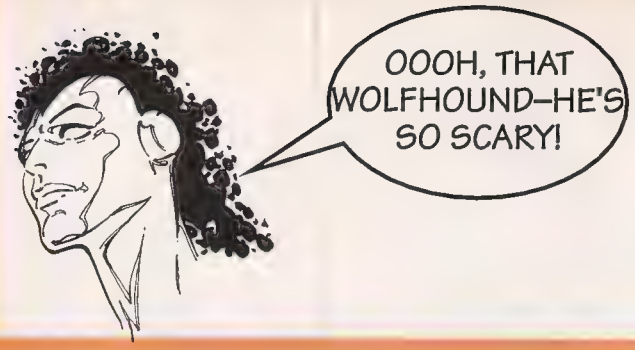
Note that he has that tall, broad-shouldered look which I established for him on the previous page; however, I cut his muscles more harshly, more sharply. His joints are very thin, his muscles are very fleshy between the joints—it gives him a very strong, yet light, appearance—and he looks very fast. As you can see, his posture was bent a little more than before—but also made a little more aggressive.

SECTION 5:

One thing I think is important to strive for when creating a character is that that character's looks reflect the character's name, and vice versa. It seems that as comics become more and more popular and more and more companies arise, it becomes harder and harder to find names that haven't been copyrighted or otherwise claimed. I further feel that a lot of times people just use names without putting much thought to the character behind the name, and a lot of odd and strange figures have come about whose names really have nothing to do with them. I think when you hear this character's name you should be able to look at this character's drawing and say, "Yeah, that reads well, that's Wolfhound."

SECTION 6:

All right, now we're going to talk about designing a character with the kind of detailed and involved background that you might get from a writer, or that you might have thought of on your own. A more detailed background will cut out some of the early steps we did for our first character, because some questions about body shaping, posture, and bearing will already be answered. You'll still have to work on the details, though, so that's what we'll concentrate on.



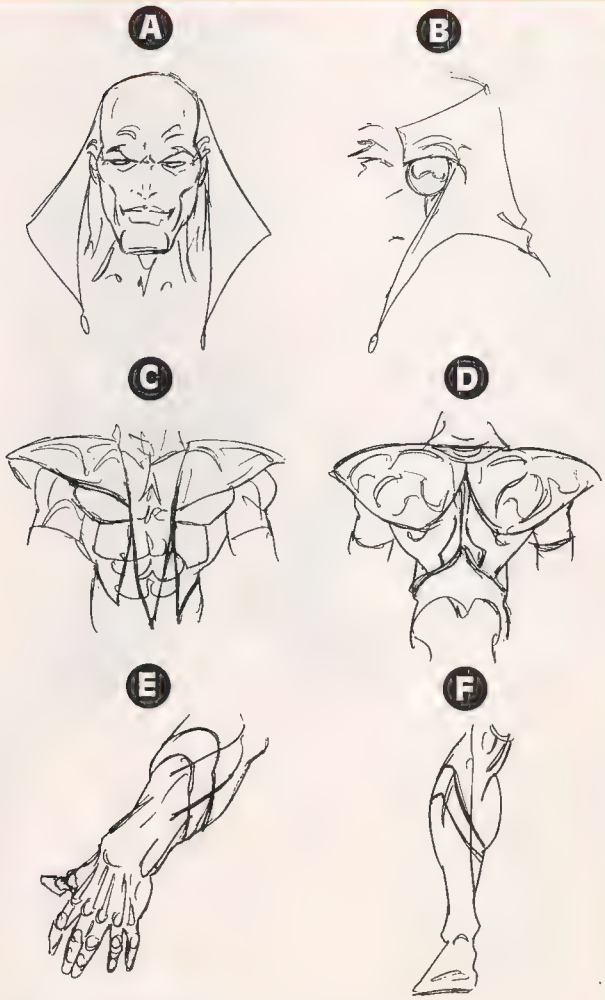
SECTION 7:

PHEROS

Height: *7'6"*
Weight: *unknown (Note: body appears very dense...presumably much heavier than someone of comparable size...estimate over 700 lbs.)*

Although PHEROS has been on Earth for several years, little is known about him. He claims to be the last survivor of an ancient alien race. He possesses a very regal bearing and has limitless confidence. There seems to be no end to his abilities or his strengths. He is known to be incredibly strong. He can fly (experts at Edwards Air Force Base have observed him traveling in excess of Mach 4). When angered, his body appears to generate intense heat, and he has fired unknown types of energy pulses from his hands, inflicting various amounts of damage. His range of vision is known to be different from the human norm, and appears to be superior in many ways. There has also been a great amount of speculation on the possibility of his psychic or psionic abilities, although there has been no evidence to substantiate these rumors. He has always appeared courteous and willing, in his own way, to help. To date, he has made no aggressive, anti-human moves. Expect updates in the future as more information becomes available.

That was the description I wrote for Pheros for a Creator's Universe trading card. It basically says he's big, regal, and confident, capable of flight, and courteous and willing to help. He seems to be a pretty good guy. I would gather this about his body shape and mass: he's tall and thickly muscled, but not grossly over-muscled. He's gonna be powerful-looking—a giant basic superhero. As for the posture and bearing, he's certainly not gonna cringe and cower. So let's work out the details, step by step.



SECTION 8

(A) Here I started with the head. This cowl-type headpiece makes him look slightly exotic, maybe a little Egyptian. I put a couple of dangling things on the end of his headpiece, just to add a little easy detail and make it appear like it has a purpose. Sometimes little details like that can add a striking realism.

(B) He doesn't have any ears; he has these metal caps over 'em. I wanted the headgear to sort of pull back around them, and sometimes get caught behind 'em.

(C) This is a front torso. I gave him some shoulder pads, which I think are heavily overdone these days, but I tried to do them a little differently, make them something that would move with him. He has a little cut to the front of his costume, and some short sleeves. I might change the sleeves later on.

(D) Here's a little detail of the back, so I know what to do when I have to draw it. I like the butterfly shape of the shoulder pads there, and how the detail on the front of his costume cuts around to the back and ties in and flows upwards with the shoulder pads.

(E) This is a close-up of the hand. You can see that Pheros has six fingers. (You know, a lot of people haven't noticed this—and his card's been out and around. Makes me kind of curious.) A simple glove design seems to give him a finished look—we'll see how it works.

(F) This sketch helps me decide if I'm going to like the costume details when I draw the entire character.

And those are pretty much all the details for Pheros. I was pretty happy with him. It pretty much said what I was thinking. Hopefully, this'll do the job when I put them all together.

Well, let's flip the page and see what happened.

SECTION 9:

Aha! Here you can see the finished Pheros character which was used in that trading card set. When I was drawing this illustration, I realized that I'd never quite determined how his torso design fit into his leg design, so I added the cuts down from his trunk into his thighs. I decided to fill in some areas with black just to lend him a somewhat graphic feel. With this kind of rendering and this design, I was looking for a nice graphic look—something that was powerful. I think adding the black to his trunk design and his upper arm sleeves and his boots gave him some solidity. (Before I filled it in, he looked pretty airy.) One thing I like about this final design is that it seems to have a nice flow to it. It also seems to match the description I was given for him.

When you're designing characters, you should keep in mind that you might have to draw this character a hundred times in a comic book. In that case, the simpler the design, the better. Now, simpler doesn't mean lack of detail; it just means well-thought-out detail that's easy to draw from panel to panel and page to page and, more importantly, from angle to angle and movement to movement. I find it quite irritating to look through a comic book and see a basic front view of some detail on a character, and then see it drawn from the side view and know that it's not the same article. A shoulder harness shouldn't change its appearance from one panel to the next just to make it easier to draw.

I've done a lot of toy design, in which people create three-dimensional sculptures based on flat two-dimensional drawings, and one thing that that has taught me—or at least it's confirmed the way I always felt—is that things have to work. I've a lot of trouble drawing something that doesn't seem to work. I have to figure it out first. Characters need to flow physically, their name has to coincide with their look (and their look with their name), the costume has to flow together. Think about every aspect of a character when you're designing one. Don't just throw a bunch of different shapes together. Everything should appear to work and have some sort of purpose, however obscure.

Pheros Name & Likeness © 1993 Bart Sears.

SECTION 10:

One thing that I think is important to note here is that most of the great characters that have survived through the ages and remained popular generally have very simple and striking costumes—for example, Batman, Superman, Spider-Man, and Captain America. These great characters have simple, to-the-point costumes. In comics, a good general rule is that simpler is better.

SECTION 11:

I was going to give you a little character description here and let you guys design him and then send him in, but I want you to work on that Batman vs. Man-Bat contest, so no go. But if you promise to send in your contest entry—and you will—I'll give you a quick, one-word description, you can pretend I'm your editor, that you missed the phone call, and that all you got was a message on your answering machine.

Here's the message: "Hey—we have no time—I need a design tomorrow—the name is Scorpios. We want something new, we want something fresh—oh, it's a bad guy—oops, sorry, gotta go. Can't wait to see it, we need it tomorrow." All right, that's all you got. Send them in. When I get a chance, I'll print a bunch of them. But work on the contest. That's more important, so don't forget it!

CLOSING:

Ah well, it's a sad time, this column is over. I hope you're all working on your contest entries, and I hope I get flooded with them like I did the last time. I wish you all good luck on it! Send in your depiction of Scorpios, and we'll see what we can do.

Till next time, thanks for reading. I truly appreciate it. And keep watching that mailbox—I'm slow but steady.

Till we meet next month in *Wizard*—all my best...and keep drawing!

THE DARK BOOK™

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They lumber and lurk, come at you from the shadows, appear with bloody mayhem on their minds. They know where you live, where you play, where you think you're totally safe. And without warning, they tear through doors, walls, universes... realities... and crush their opponents. They are the villains of comics, and Wizard Press is bringing you the world the way THEY look at it.

Marvel villains, DC villains, Valiant villains... villains from Image and villains from the past will all be on board Volume One of Wizard's first Collectors Library Series Edition: The Dark Book™. Over 100 eye-popping pages of wicked bad guys! This edition will have a heavy, aqueous coated, perfect-bound cover, featuring the new Wizard hologram seal. All for the measly price of $3.95! The whole history of angry, dangerous maniacs, in one book. Too cool.

Look for it at your favorite comic book store in February, and look for randomly-inserted certificates in Wizard 30 that will entitle the lucky finder to buy a special, cover-artist signed, foil-stamped edition - only 5000 will be made!

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THEY ARE JUST.
THEY ARE NOBLE.
THEY ARE HEROES
CHAMPIONS.
WATCHMEN.
AVENGERS.
DEFENDERS.
MEN OF STEEL.
WOMEN OF TOMORROW.
GODS OF THUNDER.
CRUSADERS
INJUSTICE! (HELP US.)
INJUSTICE! (SAVE US.)

WIZARD '93 ANNUAL CONTESTATHON ISSUE 29

Count Dem Spawn™ Hands!

Actually, that's too easy. Spawn has two hands. To make this a little more difficult, name who each of the hands depicted in this jail cell scene belong to. Yeah, you read it right, all 20 of 'em. So, whaddaya win for such accomplishing such a Herculean feat? Why, some really cool Spawn stuff, of course. Here's what you win:

Grand Prize (one winner)

A complete set of *Spawn* #1-#15, signed by *Spawn* creator Todd McFarlane, a set of *Spawn* #16-#18, signed by artist Greg Capullo, plus a Spawn T-shirt and a Spawn baseball cap, also signed by Todd McFarlane!!

Second Prize (three winners)

A copy of *Spawn* #1, a Spawn T-shirt and a Spawn baseball cap, all signed by Todd McFarlane!!

Third Prize (25 winners)

A set of *Spawn* #16-#18, signed by Greg Capullo!

[illegible] Contest is open to anyone else, [illegible] employees of Wizard Press, [illegible] and Peter David. If no entry lists all 20 hands correctly, the entries with the highest number of correct hand listings will be used to choose winners from. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the name of and information about the store where you purchase comics, and the list of character hands on an "Official Entry Form", a 3x5 index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Spawn Hands, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey NY 10952-8001. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent of substitution prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules here of. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 17, 1994 Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly-completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 18, 1994 by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after February 1, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Spawn Winners, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

Name

Age Phone #

Address

City State Zip

Store name (where you buy your comics)

Store address

City State Zip

Contest Rules
List the twenty comic book characters that have their various limbs portrayed in this panel from *Spawn* #10 on the official entry form (or a 3x5 index card or a standard postcard), complete the entry questions and mail to:
Spawn Hands, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

Spawn ™ & © 1993 Todd McFarlane

Movers & Shakers

The Most Influential People In the Comic Book Industry

By Brian Cunningham

When most people read comics, they see the creators' names and judge the book on their work alone. But what most readers don't know is that there are behind-the-scenes people who are integral parts of a big ongoing publishing and distributing machine that produces these comics on a month-to-month basis. Here are the often unsung comic book industry professionals, and what they do to keep us knee-deep in comics every month.

Capital City Distributors

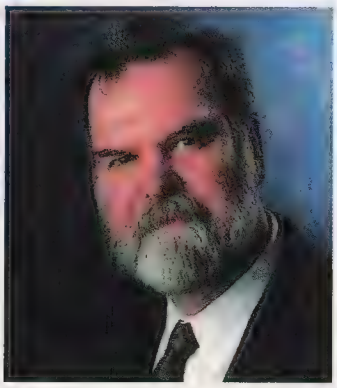
His longtime affinity for comic books persuaded Milton Griepp, president and co-owner of Capital City Distributors, that comic books could be sold as a primary product instead of as secondary merchandise. Fortunately, he was right.

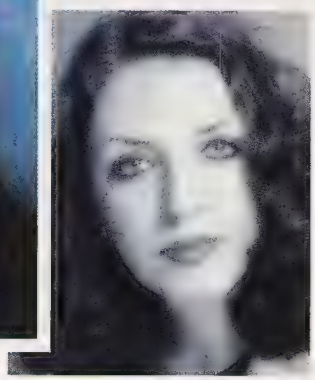
A graduate of the University of Wisconsin with a B.A. in sociology, Griepp left graduate school to go into periodical distribution full-time. He worked with his friend John Davis (now Capital City's co-owner) at two distribution companies, Wisconsin Independent News Distributors (WIND) and Big Rapids Distributors, which both sold comics as secondary items to magazines and the like. When both companies went out of business, Davis convinced Griepp that comics distribution was the way to go, and in 1980, they co-founded Capital City. As president, Griepp focuses on the internal affairs of Capital City, guiding day-to-day operations with input from the company's managers. He works together with his co-owner, Davis, to reach decisions.

Davis, Capital City's chairman, also graduated from the University of Wisconsin, but with a B.S. in history. Davis' first publishing job was with *The Velvet Light Trap*, a popular film magazine which he published and edited for ten years. In 1977, he entered the world of wholesale book distribution when he became manager of WIND. Two years later, he joined Big Rapids Distributors and managed its Wisconsin office until he left to found Capital City. As chairman, Davis is not just in charge of comic reordering; he also serves as the company's "public face," going to all of the trade shows to meet the public.

Connie Koury, Capital City's vice president of sales and marketing, is in charge of her company's sales, customer service, advertising and promotions, publications, and product management. Koury, who believes that there are lots of opportunities to be found in marketing comics, says she acts as a conduit between retailers and the publisher, keeping everyone happy.

Wayne Markley, Capital City's senior comic product manager, puts together *Advance Comics*, Capital City's comic book catalog. He determines which books will be "hot" (i.e., extremely good sellers) and points them out to store owners. His influence on any given comic can be vital to its survival.





Milton Griepp (left), John Davis, and Connie Koury of Capitol City.

Photos courtesy Capitol City Distribution.

Dark Horse Comics

Mike Richardson, president of Dark Horse Comics, grew up believing that anything was possible if you wanted it badly enough. Add that belief to a love for comic books and you get a company called Dark Horse.

Upon graduating from Portland State University with a B.A. in art, Richardson wanted to write and draw children's books. In the meantime, he opened Pegasus Books, a bookstore that happened to sell comics. In fact, it sold comics in abundance, and three more Pegasus stores soon opened. It was through these stores that Richardson met several comic book writers and artists who believed that there weren't any opportunities for creators to own their characters.

Mike Richardson (above) and Randy Stradley of Dark Horse.

PHOTOS BY AL ORTEGA.

Richardson decided to do something about it, and in 1986 he started Dark Horse. His plan was to allow creators to own their work and thereby improve the standards of comics. As president, Richardson sets the tone for all of Dark Horse's books and oversees day-to-day business. He also directs the creative aspect of the company by helping to plot certain stories. In this role, he deals directly with creators, developing new characters, designing new products, and keeping tabs on Dark Horse Entertainment, the company's film division.

A Portland State graduate with a B.S. in business administration, Neil Hankerson, Dark Horse's executive vice president, was in the restaurant business for 13 years before joining Richardson's company. An acquaintance of Richardson's, Hankerson joined him in early 1987 to become director of operations because "it sounded like more fun than the restaurant business," he says. As executive VP, he is the businessman of Dark Horse, which allows Richardson more time for the creative end of the company. Hankerson makes decisions for the accounting and legal departments, day-to-day operations, and systems management.

A veteran of the comics field, David Scroggy now hangs his hat at Dark Horse, where he is a vice president. His wide-ranging comics career dates to 1975, when he moved to San Diego from Massachusetts and began working for Pacific Comics, a chain of stores which eventually became a publisher. Scroggy was its retail manager before becoming manager of wholesale distribution. He served as Pacific's editorial director from the time it began publishing until the time it folded in 1983. Scroggy then became an artist's representative, managing artists' careers and promoting their work. Now he supervises Dark Horse's editorial and production staff as well as overseas distribution and licensing.

Randy Stradley, creative director of Dark Horse, was a freelance writer for Marvel and DC, as well as an aspiring filmmaker, before joining Richardson in 1986. He met Richardson through one of his stores and found that they had much in common. As creative director, Stradley is essentially Dark Horse's editor-in-chief; he sets up storylines, decides upon directions for each title, and finds the creators to put them to paper.

DC Comics

The longest relationship in DC Comics President and Editor-in-Chief Jenette Kahn's life has been with DC, and, according to her, it has been the most satisfying one, too. Kahn lived in a place not unlike Clark Kent's hometown, Smallville, and confesses that while she was growing up, the first comics that interested her were "boy comics," *Batman* being her favorite.

While majoring in art at Harvard University, Kahn came down with mononucleosis and was sent home to recuperate. During that time, one of Kahn's neighbors was seriously into Marvel comics and brought them over for her to read. Kahn reveals that she did read the Marvel books, but "they never had the magic for me that DC Comics did."

After completing her undergraduate degree, Kahn earned a fellowship at the Museum of Modern Art. She then published three critically acclaimed children's magazines. One of those magazines, *Dynamite*, showed people that Kahn knew what youngsters wanted to read. Bill Sarnoff, the chairman of Warner Publishing, hired her as publisher of DC. Nowadays, as DC's president and editor-in-chief, Kahn supervises the company's entire line of books. She also oversees product licensing, which includes the sale of properties to movies and television.

Paul Levitz, DC's publisher and executive VP, entered the comics field in 1971 as the editor and publisher of *The Comic Reader*, the first mass circulation fanzine devoted to comics news. He published the magazine for three years, winning two consecutive Comic Art Fan Awards for Best Fanzine. Levitz joined DC in '73 as an assistant editor, and soon earned a full editorship. Adept in both the creative and business sides of the industry, Levitz became DC's manager of business affairs in 1980, and moved to his current position in 1989. Levitz keeps DC's day-to-day operations moving, and monitors its growth as a publisher.

Bruce Bristow, DC's vice president of sales and marketing, first put his M.B.A. in marketing from Northwestern University to use in the merchandising and purchasing departments at Sears corporate headquarters, becoming a regional sales manager serving sports, juvenile, and drug specialty stores. Joining DC as its marketing director in 1982, Bristow helped supervise its co-op advertising program, major retailer programs and promotions, and backlist program. He has held his current position since 1988, and he is responsible for sales of all DC publications, including *Mad*.

Karen Berger, editor of DC's Vertigo imprint.

PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA.

Karen Berger, group editor of Vertigo, made an unlikely career choice when she became an assistant editor for DC in 1979.

Berger, who hadn't picked up a comic book since the age of 11, graduated from Brooklyn College with honors in English literature, appropriately enough, and started her career editing *House of Mystery*. She has since had celebrated stints editing *Swamp Thing*, *Wonder Woman*, and *Sandman*. She now directs the entire Vertigo imprint with three editors, three assistants, and a London office.

When Bob Wayne, DC's current director of direct market sales, was only five, his grandfather read comic books to him. The course of his life was set from that time on. In 1973, Wayne met Lewis Shiner; together they founded and edited a fanzine called *Tales from Texas*. Soon afterward, he opened a comic store. In 1987, he joined DC as its manager of retail promotions. Affectionately called "the best pitch man in comics" by admirers, Wayne is currently responsible for all of DC's business in the direct market, including servicing both distributors and retailers.

Patricia Jeres, DC's manager of marketing communications, has run the gamut of the comics industry. Freelancing for many years in both comics and journalism, she once proofread copy, edited such comics as *Those Annoying Post Bros.* and *Savage Henry*, and worked in self-publishing. Approaching her third year at DC, Jeres' main responsibilities are creating promotions for distributor catalogs, handling DC's public image, coordinating marketing information with the direct market, and supervising DC's solicitation information.

Defiant

Jim Shooter, Defiant's president and editor-in-chief, is certainly no stranger to comic books. He began his career by selling cover ideas to DC editor Mort Weisenger when he was 13, and has shown no signs of slowing down. After writing titles like *Adventure Comics* and *Superboy*, he moved to Marvel Comics and became its editor-in-chief at age 26. During his tenure at Marvel, he continued to write, scripting *Ghost Rider*, *Avengers*, *Secret Wars*, and others. Shooter left Marvel in 1987 due to disputes with upper management.

Shooter then helped form a new publishing house, Valiant, in 1989, and wrote most of its successful superhero titles, including *Magnus, Robot Fighter*; *Solar, Man of the Atom*; and *Harbinger*. Amid much controversy, Shooter left Valiant to start a new company, Defiant, aptly named for Shooter's staunch attitude. As editor-in-chief and president, Shooter oversees all of the company's creative work. He even finds time to write its flagship title, *Warriors of Plasm*.

Defiant's publisher and chief operating officer, Winston Fowlkes, brings a lot of experience with domestic and international finance to the company. Before joining Defiant, Fowlkes, a graduate of Princeton University, was vice president and treasurer of Time Incorporated. There he was responsible for all of Time's financial decisions, just as he is now in charge of Defiant's business dealings.

Clark Smith, Defiant's sales and marketing manager, began his career as an investment marketing executive at Rudolf Wolff Securities. A graduate of the University of Virginia with a B.A. in communications and rhetoric, Smith handles all of Defiant's advertising, promotions, and public relations.

PHOTOS COURTESY DEFIANT COMICS.

Defiant's Jim Shooter and Janet Jackson.

Before she became Defiant's creative director, Janet Jackson began her career as a map maker and advertiser. In 1984, she joined Marvel Comics, and became its art director two years later. Five years later, she joined Valiant and colored and edited several titles. Now, as Defiant's creative director, she not only colors certain titles, she also works with writers and artists to coordinate the creative aspect of the Defiant Universe.

Diamond Comic Distributors

Most people don't realize that Steve Geppi, the founder, president, and CEO of Diamond Comic Distributors, began his career as a mailman. He had no formal training, but Geppi's hard work and tenacity helped build an empire which is now worth over $200 million, and which continues to flourish.

PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA.

Steve Geppi, president of Diamond.

Geppi, who grew up in Baltimore's historic Little Italy district, got his first job as a "gopher" for a local newsstand, where he had to choose between payment in cash or comics. He decided on the latter, knowing he could make more money selling and trading them with his friends.

Eventually Geppi "outgrew" comics—or so he thought. He later rekindled his love for them when he became a mailman. He discovered that many of the 10-cent comics which he had loved as a kid were now worth hundreds of dollars. He bought many comics back and resold them, eventually making more money at that than he was making in his regular job. Geppi quit the Postal Service to open his first store, Geppi's Comics World. That soon became a chain of stores, which eventually led him into the world of comic book distribution, where he remains to this day. As president and CEO of the largest comic distributor in the U.S., Geppi ensures that comic stores receive their weekly shipments of comics.

Bill Schanes, Diamond's vice president of purchasing, oversees everything to do with the products which Diamond distributes. Schanes' comic days began in 1971, when he helped create Pacific Comics with his brother Steve. As president and publisher, he supervised Pacific's joint retail, distribution, and publishing operations. In 1985, Schanes joined Diamond to work in its customer service and sales division. His experience in retailing, distributing, and pub-

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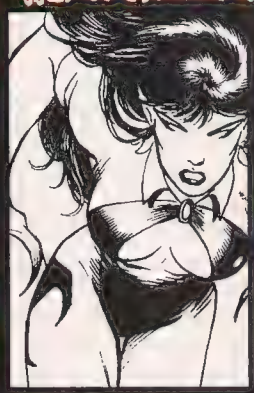

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lishing makes him well suited for his current position, with its broad purview and responsibilities.

Diamond's director of purchasing is Tom Stormonth, who oversees the purchasing and catalog department. He picks out the "gems," "spotlights," and artwork for Diamond's monthly *Previews* catalog, from which comic store owners order their comics each month. Stormonth chooses the books which he believes will sell well for a store owner. This type of power can "make or break" any given comic, and Stormonth's influence is therefore vast in the industry.

Roger Fletcher, Diamond's vice president of marketing, has been with Diamond since 1989, when he managed its Denver Distribution Center. Since relocating to Diamond's main office, Fletcher has been overseeing the customer service department, supervising the marketing presence at trade shows, and maintaining direct contact with the retailers. If there is a problem with distributing, Fletcher handles it.

Image Comics

In 1992 Erik Larsen, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Whilce Portacio, Marc Silvestri, and Jim Valentino created Image Comics to publish the comics they wanted to create without corporate interference with their characters or concepts. All of them, except Portacio, comprise Image's board of directors. (Portacio bowed out due to family commitments, which also account for the lateness of his *WetWorks* series.) As equals, each founder votes on each and every proposal, project, and business decision that is presented to them.

Erik Larsen's comic book days began at the age of 19, when he self-published a fanzine with help from his father. In 1982, he created the Savage Dragon and other characters in a title called *Megaton*, which was followed by a few issues of Americomics' *Sentinels of Justice*. His first regular assignment was penciling *D.N.Agents* for Eclipse. After that, he penciled various one-shots and become the regular penciler on *Doom Patrol* for DC, and later *Amazing Spider-Man* for Marvel. Upon founding Image, his first project was a *Savage Dragon* mini-series, which is currently enjoying a new ongoing series with numerous spinoffs.

Jim Lee intended to become a doctor until comics changed his life. A graduate of Princeton University, Lee always liked art—so much so that before going to medical school, he took a stab at becoming a penciler for Marvel. He was hired to draw Marvel's *Alpha Flight* in 1987. After a celebrated stint on *Punisher War Journal*, Lee became a smash sensation when he took over drawing *Uncanny X-Men*. That eventually led to a brand-new, record-breaking title, *X-Men*, which sold over 8 million copies. After 11 issues, Lee left *X-Men*, and Marvel, to co-found Image. Lee has occupied his own little corner of the Image Universe with his *WildC.A.T.s*, *StormWatch*, *Deathblow*, and *Gen*[13] titles.

PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA.

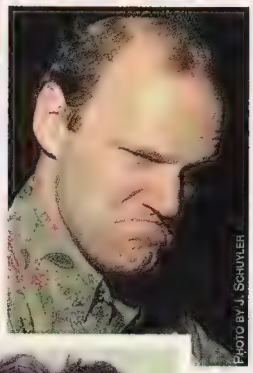

PHOTO BY J. SCHUYLER

PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA.

Image guys around the clock: (from above left) Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Erik Larsen, and Marc Silvestri.

Rob Liefeld always wanted to draw comics. His dream came true at age 18 when he went to a comic convention and was hired by Marvel after showing an editor some samples. Before he started working at Marvel, however, DC Comics hired Liefeld to do the successful *Hawk & Dove* mini-series. Then Liefeld became the artist of Marvel's *New Mutants*, and grew to superstardom with *X-Force*. Liefeld, like Jim Lee, now has his own world of superheroes, including *Youngblood*, *Brigade*, *Bloodstrike*, *Team Youngblood*, *Prophet*, and others.

He had a humble beginning in the industry, working on DC's *Infinity Inc.* and Marvel's *Incredible Hulk*, but Todd McFarlane burst into the "big time" when he began penciling *Amazing Spider-Man*, which earned him a monstrous fan following. After leaving *Amazing*, he moved on to a new Spider-Man book, entitled simply *Spider-Man*, which, at the time of the first issue's release, held the record for best-selling comic, selling in excess of 2 million. After 16 issues, he took a year off to help found Image and create *Spawn*, his current comic sensation.

After occasional fill-in work here and there, Marc Silvestri made a big splash in comics when he started penciling Marvel's *Uncanny X-Men* in 1987. After a long stint drawing the *X-Men*, Silvestri moved to *Wolverine*, later departing from that title to found Image. Since joining the young company, Silvestri has found new fame by doing his own *Cyberforce*, *Stryke Force*, and *Ripclaw* series.

Jim Valentino's comics career began when he self-published *Christmas Comics* in 1978. Since then, he's enjoyed success with Aardvark-Vanaheim's *normalman*, Warp Graphics' *Myth Adventures!*, and Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy*. He's currently enjoying enormous success with his various *Shadowhawk* projects.

When Image left Malibu Comics to publish on its own in 1992, it needed a full-time publisher. Tony Lobito was the man. Describing himself as "the lasso that pulls it all together," Lobito handles the distribution end of Image, dealing with distributors and devising promotional deals with them.

Malibu Comics

If you had told Scott Rosenberg, Malibu's president and CEO, that he would have a viable career in comics, he would've thought you were crazy. A reader of comics since age six, Rosenberg earned modest money selling comics at conventions, which he began doing at age 13. This graduated into a legitimate "job" when he created a comic book mail-order program that helped Rosenberg pay for his college education at the University of Denver, where he majored in management with an empha-

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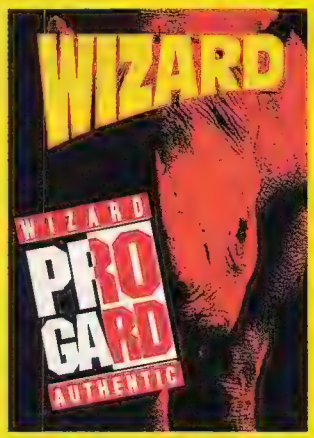

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sis on marketing. Rosenberg started Malibu in December of 1986 with Dave Olbrich. Its first title was *Ex-Mutants*, published in July 1987. As Malibu's president and CEO, he involves himself in overall decision making, as well as formulating strategies in marketing, licensing, general business, and launching new lines of titles.

Dave Olbrich, Malibu's publisher, has wanted to be in comics since he was 16 years old. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse with a B.S. in mass communications, Olbrich ran a comic store in LaCrosse, and eventually

PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA.

Malibu's Scott Rosenberg.

landed a job as the managing editor of the first run of *Amazing Heroes*. Olbrich, along with Rosenberg, started Malibu "in a space that was about 12 feet by 25 feet," he says. Olbrich's task as publisher is to negotiate contracts with creators and run Malibu's licensing and merchandising departments. "I have a hand in everything," Olbrich says.

Chris Ulm, editor-in-chief of Malibu Comics, loved comics from day one; in fact, they helped him learn to read. A graduate of California State University at Northridge with a B.A. in history, Ulm was managing the games department of Sunrise Distributors before he joined fledgling Malibu in 1986. Ulm says his awareness of comic books was renewed with the release of titles like *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen*. As editor-in-chief, Ulm wears many hats. He oversees all of Malibu's titles, determines which books to publish, selects the Malibu staff, supervises the complex computer systems, helps make executive decisions, and oversees Malibu's film division. In his spare time, Ulm writes comics. He's currently concentrating on Ultraverse's *Rune*.

Tom Mason, Malibu's creative director, has also been with Malibu since the beginning. A high school graduate with some college under his belt, Mason started his comics career as a freelance cartoonist for such magazines as *Cosmopolitan* and *Playboy*. He was brought to Malibu by Olbrich, whom Mason had known for nine years. As creative director, Mason has a hand in many areas, including editing the new creator-owned Bravura line, promotional work, and assisting development of new projects. Mason is also a writer for Malibu: he is the creator/writer of *Dinosaurs For Hire* and co-writer of *Man of War* and *Prototype*.

Marvel Comics

Managing a big business may put him in the fast lane, but Terry Stewart became well acquainted with speed as he ascended to the position of president and COO at Marvel Comics. Arriving at Marvel with an extensive background in acquisitions, licensing, strategic planning, and both domestic and international marketing, Stewart became Marvel's top man in September of 1990, less than a year after joining the publisher as executive vice president of business development.

The 46-year-old Stewart, who now resides in New York City, holds a J.D. from Cornell University Law School, an M.B.A. from Cornell University, and a B.S. in industrial engineering and a B.A. in education from Rutgers University. A longtime comic book fan and pop culture artifacts enthusiast, Stewart seems to be as perfect for Marvel as it is for him.

PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA.

Terry Stewart of Marvel Comics.

Stewart has successfully managed to market Marvel products with multiple cover enhancements, and helped pave the way for chart-topping sellers such as *Spider-Man* #1, *X-Force* #1, and *X-Men* #1. Stewart has donated some of funds and resources to charitable organizations like last year's Hurricane Relief Fund and UNICEF, through this year's comic offer. He is also attempting an unprecedented feat: marketing American comic books in Asia, where many people have never read a comic book.

Michael Z. Hobson, Marvel's group vice president of publishing, originally joined the company in 1981 with a background in the publishing business. He spent 13 years as the vice president of Scholastic Magazines and the publisher of its book club, the company's largest division. Because Marvel Publisher Stan Lee was busy in other areas, Hobson was brought in to run the day-to-day comic book operations. Nowadays, he is ultimately responsible for all of Marvel's editorial output along with its marketing and sales; anything that Marvel prints, whether it be a comic book or an advertisement, is approved by him.

Lou Bank, Marvel's current director of circulation and development, began his career in comics at age 15 with a small press comic called Just Imagine Comics, where his duties ranged from selling books at conventions to stapling them together by hand. After the owner of Just Imagine left the publishing business, Bank joined him as an assistant manager at Glenwood Distribution. When Glenwood folded, Bank joined Marvel, where he became director of sales for the direct market, heading up all aspects of marketing and sales in the direct market. At his current position, Bank has moved to the U.K. to increase Marvel's European expansion by working on the marketing of Marvel UK titles and the circulation of both U.S. and U.K. comics in the European newsstand market.

Although he says that he's technically not a comic collector, Matt Ragone, Marvel's vice president of sales for the direct market, says that he's intrigued by the comic industry, where he observes that there is a unique bond between comics and its consumers. With a B.S. in chemistry from the College of the Holy Cross, Ragone started his career at Warner Publisher Services, a mass market magazine distributor. One of his clients was DC Comics, which he shortly joined as newsstand sales manager. It wasn't long before he became circulation director, where he was in charge of distributor-related management and operations. In 1991 he moved to Marvel, where he oversees all aspects of the company's sales and marketing within the comic store-based industry.

A life-long comic fan, Sven Larsen,

director of marketing for Marvel, wanted to be a doctor. After getting an undergraduate degree in physiology from the University of Toronto, Larsen took time off before heading to medical school. He became a manager for Toronto's chain of Silver Snail comic stores and decided within six months that medicine wasn't for him. His friend, Lou Bank, helped him land at Marvel. He's presently involved in three areas: conducting market research, which includes, among other things, retailer surveys; coordinating merchandising and promotional efforts such as contests and special covers; and, in conjunction with Ragone and a few others, determining publishing strategies.

Gary Guzzo, Marvel's publicity manager, uses his entertainment experience as well as his charm to get the good word out about Marvel. A comic collector since 1960 and a comic store owner for eight years, Guzzo worked as an audiovisual producer for corporations, engineering and building sets for trade shows. He came to Marvel in 1992 as a consultant for the Hurricane Relief Program in August of 1992, through which Spider-Man gave comics to children whose homes had been destroyed by Hurricane Andrew.

Valiant

After spending most of his life in the entertainment business, Steve Massarsky, Valiant's publisher and CEO, has patiently installed the name "Valiant" into the upper echelon of comics. With a B.A. from Brown University and a J.D. from Rutgers University, he was a manager for musical performers like Aerosmith and Cyndi Lauper from 1975 to 1981, and an entertainment lawyer from '81 to '90, occasionally working in music management during those years. Then Massarsky turned his experiences as a manager and his business savvy to use in the comic industry as a founding partner of Valiant's parent company, Voyager Communications, in 1989. He saw comics as another format for great entertainment, just like the music industry.

As publisher and CEO, Massarsky effectively runs the entire company. All personnel report to him, and he is in charge of long-range planning for Valiant. Although he's the boss, Massarsky dispels the belief that he is a dictator. "I'm more of a 'consensus manager,'" Massarsky says. "I discuss things with my staff. If Bob Layton, Jon Hartz, Fred Pierce, or Ed Dupre all really want to do something, I'm not going to say, 'Well...I don't want to do it just because I say so.'"

Valiant's editor-in-chief and senior vice president is Bob Layton. With an extensive background as a comic book creator, Layton brings creative experience to the Valiant crew and oversees every creative aspect of the company. Layton started out as an inker for Charlton and DC Comics, and quickly moved over to Marvel, where he inked, wrote, and penciled many Marvel titles for 15 years. Looking to do more editorial work, Layton left Marvel for the budding Valiant, where he started out as its production manager, as well as inking and writing many of its titles. Presently, besides overseeing every Valiant title, Layton also inks many of its covers and writes *The Second Life of Dr. Mirage*.

Jon Hartz, Valiant's senior vice president, "fell into comics," as he puts it. A lifelong fan, Hartz's first job in comics was in 1976, when he worked at a comics store in San Diego. He was paid with comics. His next step was joining Pacific Comics' distribution network in 1980. In 1984, Hartz landed a job with Neal Adams' Continuity Graphics, which published comics and was a major advertising agency. After working two years as a sales representative for Continuity, Hartz spent the next few years as a freelance sales rep. Hartz joined Valiant in 1990 as its direct sales manager, which grew into his present management position, in which he oversees the entire sales and marketing department. As a key member of Valiant, Hartz has a hand in the artistic, editorial, and general direction of the company. He is also gearing up to write February's *Timewalker* series.

Fred Pierce, Valiant's vice president of operations, runs the business end of the company, shrewdly spending Valiant's money and setting various schedules with printers and color separators. After obtaining a B.S. in biology at Hofstra University, Pierce was hired as an assistant vice president at a Bankers Trust branch, where numerous Valiant investors banked, and got to know many of them. "I was drafted," Pierce laughs when asked how he came to Valiant. Pierce laments that while all the glory goes to the solid creative end of a company, not much praise comes to a solid business end. Business "really is a key element," says Pierce, adding that a weak business division is a chink in the armor of many a small publisher.

A new face at Valiant, vice president of marketing Marty Stever is better known for his former job as Capital City's advertising and promotions manager. Brought to Capital City by Griepp and Davis after working in the game industry, Stever was in charge of marketing for the company. He also oversaw *Advance Comics*' covers, all of the promotional items inside of them, and incoming and outgoing advertising for Capital City. In his current position at Valiant, Stever works under Hartz as head of Valiant's marketing, which entails both public relations and advertising. ☆

Photo courtesy Capitol City.

Photo by J. Schuyler.

Photo by Al Ortega.

Photo by J. Schuyler.

Clockwise from left: Steve Massarsky, Marty Stever, Bob Layton, and Jon Hartz of Valiant.

Industry Roundtable

The Future of the Comic Book Marketplace

By Rob Samsel

1993 was a tumultuous year in the comic book industry. The November 1992 "Death of Superman" story generated unbelievable sales and attracted an enormous amount of new people into the collecting, reading, and investing arena of the industry. After Supes' death, the industry just seemed to kick into high gear. A batch of new companies sprouted up—Bongo, Dagger, Defiant, Lightning, Topps, and Triumphant, to name a few—and existing companies added new imprints—Dark Horse's Comics' Greatest World, DC's Vertigo, and Malibu's Ultraverse spring to mind. It all happened so quickly that it was tough to keep track of all the players without a scorecard.

While comic fans lapped up all the new product as fast as their overextended budgets would allow, the shadow of the speculator-driven market reared its head in the early part of 1993. Thanks to the strong performance of comics on the secondary market in the latter part of '92, many folks tried to cash in on the newfound popularity of comics, and several dollars were infused into the marketplace from new sources, mainly buyers moving away from the deflated sports card market. Comics were looked upon as a new source of quick cash turnaround, and manufacturers took notice, expanding lines and offering a veritable plethora of enhanced versions of their books.

At the outset, consumers bought in earnest, seemingly mesmerized by all the flash generated by the new market. Unfortunately—or, to some, fortunately—the high-riding market didn't last, and new comics were eventually offered below cover price, and, in some instances, below cost! This was due to the rampant overordering of new product, and the fact that several high profile products didn't perform up to the level of their advance hype.

Towards the beginning of the summer, as dealers wallowed in unsold product, a new phase of the market began: the corrective phase. Since dealers felt burned, orders dropped off dramatically. Subsequently, publishers were forced to take action to ensure that none of their products slipped through the cracks that were opening in the marketplace with alarming regularity. Many companies were simply used to soliciting and printing their products and then watching them sell, but that was no longer the case. Comics now had to be treated like any other product: they had to be marketed to the public. It seemed that many companies couldn't recognize this fact, and sales suffered as a result.

The "Death of Superman" in late 1992 attracted an enormous amount of attention on the comic industry, and not all of it turned out to be benificial.

While we might be making it seem like the latter stages of 1993 were all gloom and doom, that was hardly the case. Many exciting, fresh new products were offered in '93, and were subsequently embraced by the public—and not just books, either. Toys, non-sport cards, and cartoons have all helped bring comics to a new level of recognition. And while sales are slower now than they were earlier in the year, the media attention focused on comics did serve to bring in a large batch of new readers, as opposed to investors. This new crop of readers have varied tastes, and they recognize that comics aren't just the junk food of literature—they can be a viable source of quality fiction.

As comics enter this new phase of their existence, it appears that we have a lot to ponder. To help us, we assembled an all-star cast of high-profile industry figures who hopefully will be able to shed some light on the year ahead. Joining us for this discussion are (in no particular order) Malibu Creative Director Tom Mason, Valiant Publisher and Chief Executive Officer Steve Massarsky and Senior Vice President Jon Hartz, Image Publisher Tony Lobito and Promotions Director Kyle Zimmerman and founding member and superstar artist Jim Lee, Defiant President and Publisher Jim Shooter, Dark Horse Publisher Mike Richardson, Eclipse Sales and Marketing VP Beau Smith, Marvel Sales VP Matt Ragone, and, from the retail community, Moondog's Inc. President Gary Colabuono and Dream Factory Chief Executive Officer Mike Raub.

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WIZARD: Of all the factors which contributed to the topsy-turvy state of 1993's comic marketplace, the proliferation of large-scale speculation was probably the most controversial. The end of '93 saw a decreased emphasis on the speculative end of the market, prompting many to feel that speculation was dead and gone. Our first question to the panel: How do you feel about comic speculation, and what effect will it have on the market in the future?

Gary Colabuono: There have always been speculators in the comic book business...I used to buy duplicates of most Marvels in 1964 through 1966 to sell and trade to collectors for a profit. The amount of speculation, and to what degree it affects the marketplace, varies, depending on factors no one can predict.

Steve Massarsky: The speculative market will never die—it will grow and shrink in cycles... It is not a market we should count on to build this industry. This industry must be built as an entertainment medium for readers and collectors.

Tom Mason: I think the speculative market has its peaks and valleys and is here to stay. I think there's more to comics than just back issue prices. I'm from the old school that actually still likes to read them.

Mike Richardson: The long-term good of the market isn't served by building speculative sales; it's a short-term profit generator that will ultimately disappoint and lead to problems in the marketplace. When the bottom falls out of the speculative market—and it will—retailers are going to be hurt, and consumers are going to be turned off because they've been lied to. They've been told that these books are going to be worth money.

Beau Smith: I feel that the speculative market on comic books is beginning its last gasp of the trading card-foil embossed-look at me-I glow in the dark-scratch me-feel me-smell me-make the buyer feel like he or she is getting a limited edition-send your kid through medical school era of raccoon marketing... By raccoon marketing, I mean that some publishers feel that, if they offer the comic book reader a bright, shiny object in the form of a comic book, they will kiss it, caress it, think that it is worth far more than it really is. The days of insulting the comic book buyer are over.

The buyer wants a solid, entertaining story with pleasing-to-the-eye artwork, with a price that doesn't offend their wallet, and they want it on a timely basis. There is a major fed-up chain reaction going through the industry. The comic readers have voiced that they want full-color comics in the $1.25 to $1.95 price range. The polybagged, trading card-filled package is not what they want. Yes, there is a decrease in the speculative market.

1994 will be the year that we see a lot of the 'cardvestites' [Smith's pet name for the sport card dealers who entered the comic market in November 1992] leaving the comics industry and crawling back into their dank little world of promo and error cards. My feelings on that: Go on, get outta my house!

Jim Shooter: As long as there's an occasional issue that rises rapidly in value, there will always be speculators. However, so many speculators got burned in recent months, I believe that the recent speculator boom is over.

Kyle Zimmerman: How fast and how much it will die, I don't know. It is shrinking.

Tony Lobito: Actually, I feel it's dead.

WIZARD: Since our panel agrees for the most part about the fate of speculation, we figured we'd ask them about the marketplace's reaction to the disappearance of speculative buying—namely the knee-jerk reaction of retailers cutting their orders, in some instances to the point of underordering. Is the marketplace overcorrecting itself?

Massarsky: I believe a lot of material is underordered currently. However, I do not believe it is due to panic. There are too many products and not enough shelf space available at the retail level. With the plethora of products, retailers should order to sell out and move quickly on to the next release. Also, many retailers are stuck with too much inventory, so they don't have the cash to buy for the back issue side of the business.

> "Consumers are going to be turned off because they've been lied to. They've been told that these books are going to be worth money."
> —Mike Richardson of Dark Horse

Jon Hartz: No, I don't think the market ever has or ever will underorder or overcorrect across the board... A few key titles might be underordered here or there, but in general, retailers order what they can sell, or go out of business.

Mason: I think there is tremendous demand for the Ultraverse titles. Some of them are being consistently underordered as people try to correct the mistakes of the past. I know they're underordered because they are selling out in just a few days, and we're getting calls from people who still want them. The demand for the Ultraverse titles is very strong at the customer level.

Matt Ragone: The market is correcting itself. Unfortunately, it seems to be doing this through across-the-board reductions in every order, rather than by reviewing sales by title to maintain a core readership order. Incremental orders should be focused on speculation. In the current correction, equal reduction is given to both

core and speculative product.

Mike Raub: If retailers were under-ordering, it seems to be that we would have a *lack* of product available out there, but I can think of no book that has been in short supply, even going as far back as spring/late winter.

Jim Lee: I for one welcome the lower numbers; they show a more discriminating taste. For a while, they were ordering anything with the Image banner at really high numbers, and it was perplexing to me... I was wondering, 'What's going on here?' I knew that, with orders this big, somewhere along the line people would be getting stuck with books. What can you do, limit them? That would only fuel the hysteria more. People would be screaming that we were trying to fix the market....

What I don't think a lot of these people realize is that a lot of these back issues that people bought a lot of will eventually sell, the same way a lot of the X-Men stuff that I did in 1990 is starting to move. I predict the same thing will happen to Image: as we put out our eighth, 10th, and 15th issues of our various core titles, the number 1s, 2s, and 3s will be harder to find. That's already happening with the early issues of *Spawn*....

I think that people are going to have to look at their ordering practices and wonder why they were ordering so many copies of this stuff. People aren't thinking about supply and demand, they're just thinking, "This stuff is hot, I'll just sell through and make a mint off of this," without realizing that everyone else is thinking the same thing. A store has never lost money selling out of what's ordered.

Smith: I think that the retailers are a little more cautious about ordering the comics with the bells and whistles. I do believe that they are taking a much closer look at long-standing titles, and realizing that there is a reason why these comics have such a long, fruitful track record. They are starting to promote these titles with a little more zest and creativity. Most are finding that the audiences for these books are becoming stronger, and new readers are joining on.

Hartz: The best aspect was that there was a new focus in the mass media on comics, what with the X-Men and Batman animated cartoons, as well as Image and DC's "Death of Superman" promotions. The worst aspect was the sudden influx and exit of speculative [buyers]. This caused havoc with the industry's cash flow.

> "People aren't thinking about supply and demand, they're just thinking, 'This stuff is hot, I'll just sell through and make a mint off of this,' without realizing that everyone else is thinking the same thing." —Jim Lee on retailing

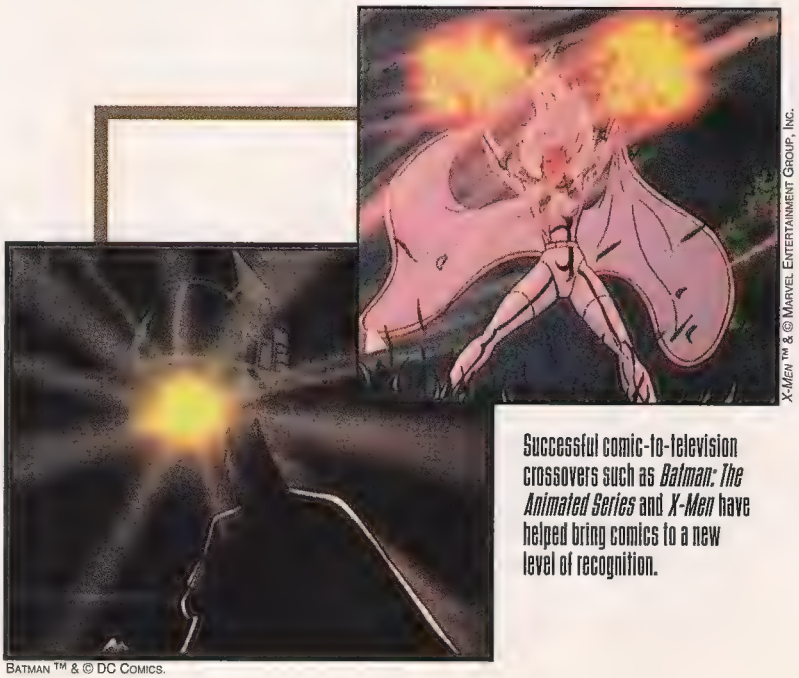
WIZARD: What were the best and worst aspects of this year's comic book marketplace?

Colabuono: Growth in customers due to Superman, Batman, X-Men cartoons, et cetera was really encouraging... This obsession with superheroes and universes was the biggest downer.

Massarsky: Best aspect: competition makes for better comics and marketing. Worst aspect: the glutted market and overspeculation.

Shooter: The best thing about 1993 was the willingness of the market to accept new things like Comics' Greatest World, the Ultraverse, and the Defiant Universe.

Raub: The best aspect of the year was the feeling of excitement and hope we all felt coming out of the '92 holiday season. The worst was the flip side of those hopes that we were all experiencing at the end of the summer.



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Smith: The best aspects of the comic market for 1993 were the renewed interests in comics being published by smaller companies; and new publishers being able to come in and make an immediate impact. Both of these aspects give the comic book reader a wider choice of material.

The worst aspect of 1993 was the fact that the card-vestites were trying to play a major part in our industry. Short term retailers and distributors... acted like ticks on a dog: Grab a hold, suck the blood until there ain't no more, and jump off. This industry needs publishers, retailers, and distributors that want to be here for the long run—not build up a company just to sell it out from under the employees that worked so hard doing something they love.

I was also disturbed at seeing younger readers bagged, tagged, and dragged into buying comic books that were nothing more than a fancy box with nothing but a turd of a story and art inside. That's no way to cultivate a future in publishing.

WIZARD: Our panel was asked what, if anything, they would have done differently in '93. The responses ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Shooter: [I] would have encouraged our trading card licensee, the River Group, to market their *Plasm* cards and albums differently to avoid the problems that were inadvertently caused.

Colabuono: [I would have] ordered less comics.

Lee: We're going to do things to improve things with retailers. We're going to do a promotional tour. I'm hiring someone to be a retail liaison, just to talk to retailers around the country. Someone to find out the concerns they have and the issues they want to address. Basically, we want to listen to the retailers as well as the fans.

Mason: In 1993, things went according to our master plan for the year—we made changes and adjustments as the market fluctuated, but our overall plan remained intact. So much so that I'm looking forward to 1994.

Smith: Knowing what I know now, I would know not to eat that burrito at the Red Lizard at the San Diego Con this year.

WIZARD: Since there were so many comic books and comic-related materials to choose from, it was only natural that a few items were overlooked. What do you think were 1993's most overlooked products?

Colabuono: *1963.*

Hartz: I personally thought Dark Horse's Comics' Greatest World promotion would have done better than it did. It still was certainly a success, and I'm sure it did much better for Dark Horse than break even, after accounting for sales versus money spent on promotion. Still, going into last summer, I really thought Dark Horse's new universe would leap ahead of everyone else's. It was such a good promotion—I wish I'd thought of it!

Massarsky: Valiant Vision is a unique product that would have gotten a much bigger launch in a less crowded market. Once people see it, I believe it will catch on. It gives people another way to get enjoyment out of comics.

Raub: I'd have to say Ultraverse, but the game isn't over yet, and we still feel that this line will continue to gain strength into 1994.

Ragone: *Fantastic Four* #381 and *Moon Knight* #55, which are now experiencing renewed consumer interest due to editorial changes that were overlooked originally.

WIZARD: Cover enhancements—also known as gimmicks—were the subject of much discussion this year. It seemed as if almost everybody was printing enhanced comics of every kind. Were these enhancements good or bad for the industry?

Smith: Gimmicks are nothing more than what it says in the dictionary—a tricky device... Nowhere does it say that it is an enhancement of product or being. I think the customer is tired of paying extra for being tricked. I don't think they are going to put up with it anymore. I know I wouldn't. Nobody likes wearing a sign that says, "Kick me, I like it." And they sure don't want to be the one to hang it on themselves. If you're served donkey dump on a silver platter with a beautiful flower arrangement, it still doesn't make the donkey dump taste good. Most of the time the readers are getting just that—crummy story and art wrapped up in a velvet covering.

Hartz: Enhancements—or gimmicks, if you will—will still be a useful sales tool, but they can't, and won't, be used unless they offer perceived added value to a package. Consumers are wising up, and won't buy a gimmick for gimmick's sake. Consequently, those publishers who use them will have to use them smartly and carefully.

Zimmerman: [I feel] that fans are tired of gimmicks with a price tag. If you can give them a cool special cover or whatever without a price hike, then it's a plus.

Colabuono: In magazine or book publishing, the key to gimmicks is to sell more product. However, because we have a system of no returns, the focus of gimmicks in the comic book market should be to help retailers sell through their orders.

"If you're served donkey dump on a silver platter with a beautiful flower arrangement, it still doesn't make the donkey dump taste good."
—Beau Smith on gimmicks

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY--
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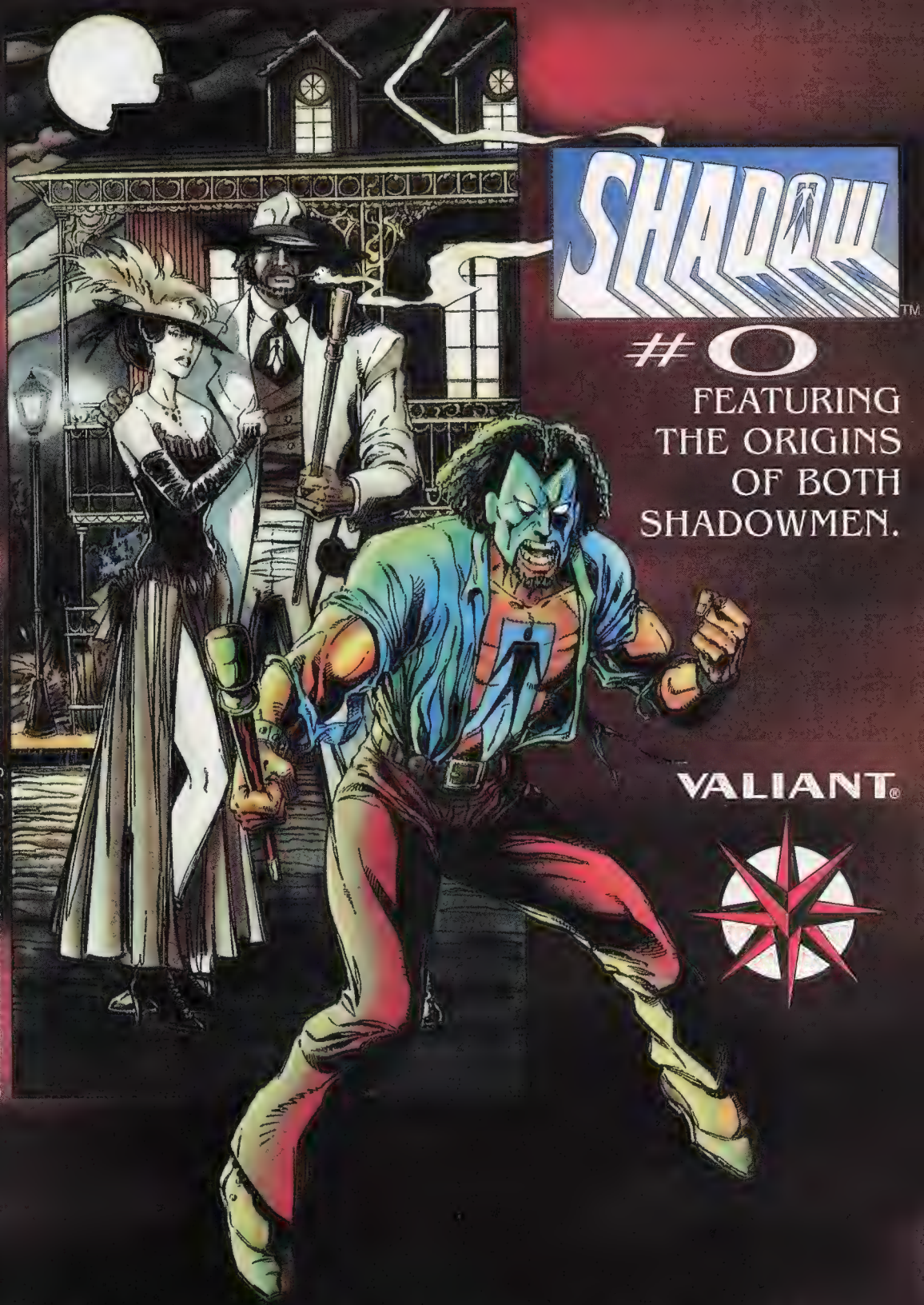

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I encourage publishers to continue to use gimmicks when appropriate, but not to tell us about them until we open the cartons. And not to charge extra for them either.

WIZARD: When asked about increasing exposure of comics through the use of market outlets such as TV, radio and newspapers, the response from our gang was a resounding "*Yes!*" What prompted this reaction?

Hartz: Right now, I think the mass market doesn't even think of [the comic book] as any kind of literature. I feel it's generally thought of as simply a collectible. This is the reason that I feel every publisher, distributor, and retailer should be stressing the entertainment value to comics in every press release, promotion, and contact they may have with outside news and media sources.

Colabuono: Comics are gaining respectability. It will ultimately come. All we need to do is continue to show comics as entertainment for the entire family—then produce comics for the entire family. We must continue to be responsive to the changing tastes of consumers, so we can keep that consumer for life.

Smith: The perception of comics is right in the middle of change. Right now is the most important time for comics. The ice has been broken for comics to catch up with Japan and Europe in making comic books as respectable as any other magazine on the racks. With the wide selection of comics [available today], plus so many comics that target the same audience as hit box office movies, comics should be a powerful force in the entertainment industry. The bat is in our hands, we just need to start cracking some heads.

Zimmerman: [We in the comic industry should] help literacy campaigns on a more regular basis, and take the opportunity to work with charity organizations. I hear more and more of teachers using comics in class to help kids read, write, et cetera, or of high profile mainstream individuals [who] admit to being comic book fans... I think the mindset is changing, but there will always be opposition groups.

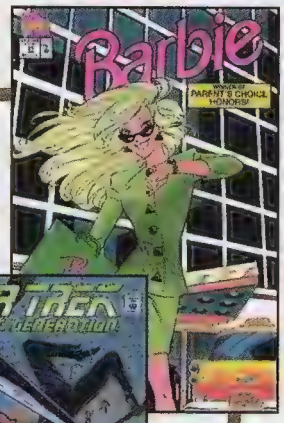
WIZARD: What does the future hold for the industry in 1994 in terms of market growth? Will there be any new publishers entering the industry this year? Will any existing publishers have to leave the industry?

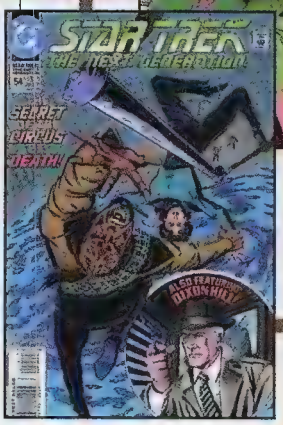
Colabuono: The comics market will continue to expand in '94, but not in the traditional direct market serviced by comic book stores. The growth will come from new customers introduced to comics and related goods in entertainment/pop culture stores, or kiosks or boutiques located in enclosed malls and high traffic shopping areas. The mainstream consumer is accepting our products, but isn't interested in the collector's side of them, and won't go out of his or her way to buy them.

Smith: There is going to be a brief period of stabilization in the industry. It will not last long. The retailers have been through enough storms in the past...they are more prepared to take care of the situation and get back to running speed without too much delay.

I think we are going to see a major expansion in 1994 that will spill over and come to a climax in 1995. The outside world is becoming more and more aware of what entertainment the comics field has to offer. This has a lot to do with comics readers getting older and becoming more a part of the media and the outside entertainment industry. Like TV and movies, comics are becoming a more accepted part of the entertainment world, and not just the redheaded stepchild. It's up to the comics industry to also push more into the outside market with advertising, and getting comics into mass merchandising outlets that don't carry comics and graphic novels. Retailers should look at this not as competition, but as an extra sales tool. The more the non-comic reading public finds comics in

"You've got the Ultraverse, *Bone*, *Sandman*, *Star Trek*, *Barbie*...that's about as diverse as you can get."
—Tom Mason of Malibu





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places like Wal-Mart, K-Mart, and other outlets, [the more] these non-comic readers [will] become regular comic readers...coming to direct sales comic shops for a more in-depth stock of back issues and of more specialized types of comics. Look at it as a big carrot...in front of a very large donkey.

Raub: Will the market expand to more stores? The answer is yes. Will there be even more product out there? I'd have to say no. What I hope will happen is that publishers will carefully consider each title they add, making '94 a year of quality rather than quantity.

Hartz: The market has grown every year since the mid-'70s. Sometimes by only 3 or 4%, [sometimes by] as much as 10-15% per year, but it has always had growth years. I don't believe 1994 will be any different. All companies, new and old, will find it rough out there for at least the first two quarters of 1994.

Lobito: I feel that the market will stabilize with some publishers and retailers going out of business... It's definitely going to be rough sailing as the market continues to correct itself and uncertainty still remains in retailer's minds on whether to buy into new universes.

Massarsky: The market has undergone a huge expansion from late '92 until its peak in April '93. That expansion must be digested prior to the next expansion. Even without further expansion, '93 has far exceeded '92, and if '94 just holds steady with late '93, we will be way ahead of the game.

Ragone: Overall, this is a strong, healthy and vibrant industry. And the opportunities for continued long-term growth have never been better. On a consumer level, we see continued growth in the number of consumers entering the market. And we see a continued steady increase in the number of kids and teens...reading comics on a regular basis. There will be more casual first-time readers than ever before, and more regular readers than ever. Importantly, there will probably be a lot fewer speculators than in 1993, as the industry gets back to the basics of selling "reading entertainment."

Presuming that retailers and consumers remain overwhelmed by the amount of product and that a publisher cannot change that trend, then launching a new title in '94 may be more difficult than in '93.... If a company can overcome the obstacles within the market and has a solid property, the market will embrace the product. But make no mistake, there are some major obstacles.

Colabuono: It will be very difficult for any newcomer to steal a significant market share from today's leaders. Almost all new publishers are offered at 45% and 50% off [cover price] maximum. Immediately, these new lines are at a competitive disadvantage with the leaders. How important is that 2½% to 7% when a retailer has to choose between tried and true moneymakers at max discount and brand new characters and books that are 7¢ to 17¢ more expensive?

It will be very rough sailing for everyone, but new companies will find it even more difficult and expensive to make money. How deep are the pockets of all these newcomers? What sort of effect would a couple of publishing failures have on the market? When does the luster of no returns wear off and reveal itself as fool's gold? I believe some fundamental errors were committed by companies who underestimated the uniqueness of the direct market when they entered this year. I believe those companies have absolutely no chance of succeeding.

Shooter: Good work will succeed.

> "I hope that publishers will carefully consider each title they add, making '94 a year of quality rather than quantity."
> —Mike Raub

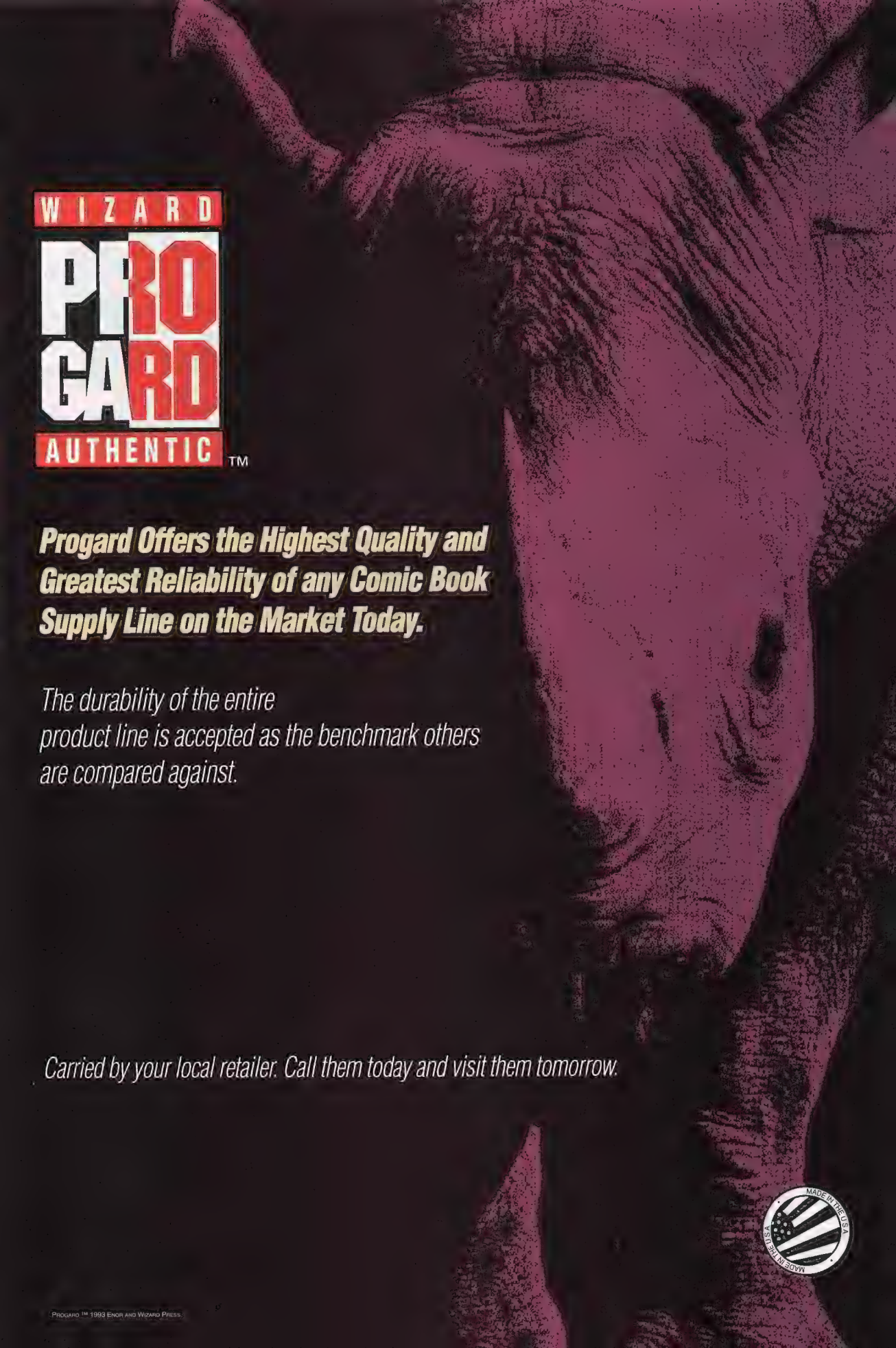
Smith: New companies will find the sailing pretty good unless they try to send a fleet out into the water instead of a couple of sturdy boats. Any new company coming out should really do their homework beforehand. If not, all you'll be left with is your hand.

Mason: I'd like to see the market stabilize and then expand gradually. I'd rather see new readers join the industry, instead of focusing on trying to get the current audience to buy more comics. I think all the right pieces are there for that to happen. There's enough diversity of product in the marketplace that there's at least one comic book for everyone—you've got the Ultraverse, *Bone*, *Sandman*, *Star Trek*, *Barbie*...that's about as diverse as you can get....

I think new companies can still carve out a niche in today's marketplace, but I don't know if it will be big enough to sustain them long-term. I hope they've got the guts and the financial stamina to tough it out.

Lee: We're fighting to get more money into the retailers' hands; we're trying to build this industry. We want to get it away from being a bunch of struggling stores. These stores have to do well for the industry to keep growing. We have to get more stores into more cities and towns where they're not selling comics.

WIZARD: Well, gang, after reading our little overview of the industry—assembled with mucho help from our fine, knowledgeable, and highly appreciated friends!—does anyone out there still want to own a comic store, or become a publisher or distributor? We weren't trying to give everyone the heebie-jeebies by printing this article, we're just trying to point out some fundamental problems our favorite industry faces in the future, and possible solutions. More than anything, this article should serve as a casual reminder to the comic-buying public that if you have a favorite creator, publisher, or title, you should make sure to do what you can to lend your support. Readers—and buyers—like you will have to stay active to keep all of your favorites thriving on the shelf and in your collection. ☆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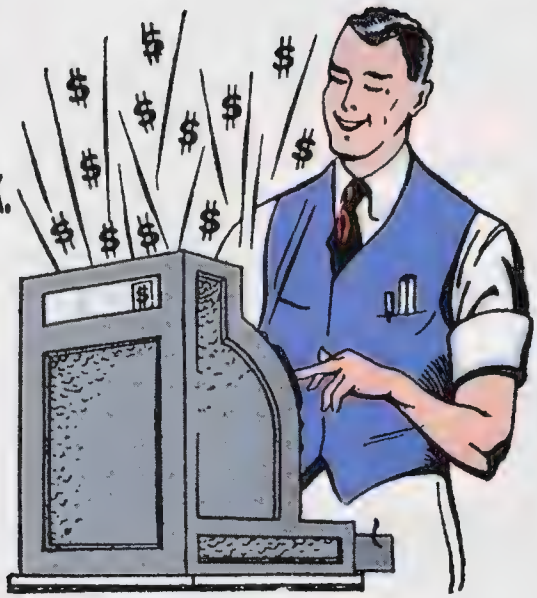


By Patrick Daniel O'Neill

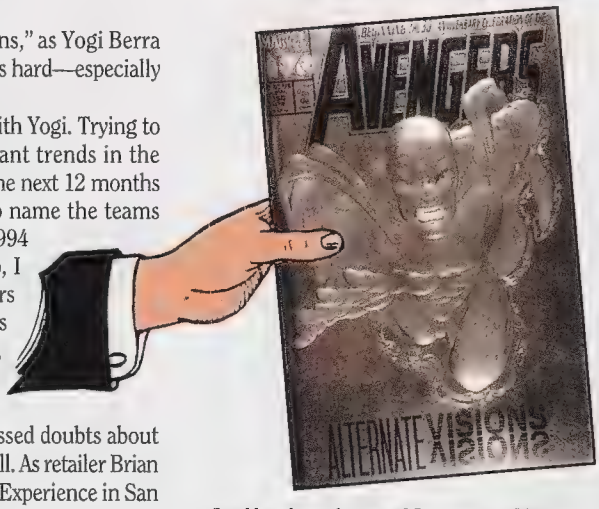
"Making predictions," as Yogi Berra reportedly once said, "is hard—especially about the future."

I can sympathize with Yogi. Trying to figure out the important trends in the comics business over the next 12 months is not unlike trying to name the teams which will be in the 1994 World Series. For help, I turned to some retailers and comics professionals who have, in the past, shown an ability to see the future with clarity.

Some people expressed doubts about being able to do this at all. As retailer Brian Hibbs, owner of Comix Experience in San Francisco, put it: "You can no longer predict anything. That's kind of funny, I realize, but there is no rhyme or reason to the way things sell for retailers in the direct market. You try your best to predict how an item is going to sell, but there's no pattern anymore...or if there is, the pattern is so chaotic you can't see it."

Since that might well be the case, let's look at the trends of the past year or two which will be ending in 1994, if they haven't already, as well as those that are just beginning to be felt. Most of the folks I talked to agreed that the speculation frenzy has passed its peak and may already have ended.

"The speculation will never die completely," says comics historian and writer Lawrence Watt-Evans. "There'll always be people who think they can get rich by buying a dozen copies of some trendy #1 and waiting six months, but I think enough people have been burned by the recent wild excesses to reduce speculation as a major market force, and to make good story and art the keys to success."



A gold-embossed cover of Avengers #360.

Hibbs, looking at things from a retailer's perspective, agrees. "I think it's clear that we're experiencing the end of the speculation cycle—and it's coming without the predicted bust, it seems. It's partially because the retailers have wised up, and because the people who came in for a quick hit-and-run have done that."

"Speculators are definitely on the way out," agrees *Elfquest* contributor Bill Neville. "Oh, not the guy who buys two copies of a first issue; we've all done that—well, I have, anyhow. I mean the guys who buy 10 or 20 or 100 copies of a comic that isn't even a very good comic...and then don't buy 100 issues of any of my comics! But really, I hope all these polybags and trading cards go away soon, too. Gee, did I just say that to *Wizard*?"

Retailer William A. Christensen, of Comic Cavalcade, Champaign, Ill., and a regular *Wizard* contributor, agrees with Neville. "There will always be a certain amount of speculation in the field," he notes. "Certainly a lot of the card people who came in when the card market went soft, bought a lot of Valiant and Image, and lost their shirts have gone away."

His partner, Mark Seifert, concurs, adding, "Speculation has returned to the level it was at prior to the summer of 1992. After all, speculation in comics can be dated all the way back to 1973 and *Shazam!* #1."

On the subject of those bags and cards and all the other "enhancements" used in recent years to attract the buyer, if not the reader, it also seems as if that stuff will be a controversial issue for a while longer. Some folks seem to think they're dead as a way to increase sales, while others think they are here to stay.

"From talking with readers and dealers, it's clear that the age of gimmicks is slowly closing," according to writer Steven D. Grant, who's currently working on *Spectacular Spider-Man* for Marvel, among other projects. "It will hold on for a while, because companies continue to come up with new gimmicks, but the life span of a gimmick these days

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is one use. No one has any interest in a gimmick the second time around. After the gimmick cover and trading card frenzy of the last couple of years, POGs made it clear that the audience is now making it considerably harder for a fad to be manufactured."

But Neville disagrees to some extent: "Cover enhancements will hang on. Hey, they seem to be a success in the paperback book market, and with the crowded racks in today's comics shops, a visual 'hook' couldn't hurt if it doesn't cost much."

Once again, Christensen and Seifert are in accord with Neville. "There are enough new possibilities and permutations that we'll continue to see enhancements and gimmicks in the future," Christensen says. "There's still room for really well-done enhancements."

Seifert continues, "If you see foil on a cover now, you don't give it a second thought; it's commonplace."

So what will be the selling points for comics if the gimmicks disappear? In differing ways and to differing extents, these insiders say content—what's between the covers—will be the key.

"A lot of companies have already made a lot of noise about publishing 'stories,' which have become another gimmick," Grant chuckles. "Earlier this year, virtually every publisher I know was gleefully contemplating the coming crash, and every single one told me that their company was best poised to survive, because they alone were doing stories. Little companies trying to masquerade as up-and-comers while publishing the same old crap have been advertising themselves as having great stories. So there is clearly no consensus on what a great story is, aside from an advertising gimmick.

"[But] given that, stories do seem to be coming back into vogue," he continues. "I don't see a lot of trends toward experimentalism; the comics mainstream will continue to be superheroes for the foreseeable future, but...you're going to see a lot of material struggling to break beyond it, as happened in the early '70s and the mid-'80s. The big question is whether an audience base now exists to support it, and, if it does, will companies try to support that audience base this time around instead of trying to co-opt it?"

To a large extent, Watt-Evans agrees, saying that the emphasis in marketing will return to "good story and art. However, by that I don't mean the critically acclaimed stuff that's been around for years, like *Cerebus* or *Sandman*—I mean stuff that appeals to a broad, not particularly thoughtful audience. *Spawn* will probably thrive for years yet, but will never set any more records; incoherent nonsense like Liefeld's will fade away. I expect Ultraverse's *Sludge* to outsell *Youngblood* by the end of '94."

However, the packaging of all that "good story and good art" may change—at least that's how Ultraverse writer Len Strazewski sees it. "The key trend I see is the move away from continuing series as a viable comic strategy," he notes. "About five years ago, the best strategy for a publisher was to develop a regular monthly series and demonstrate that they were in the business for the long haul. While this still has some value, I think the industry has moved to a 'big event' posture built on mini-series or story arcs within regular titles. The comic book industry has never learned to market a monthly series properly, but has fallen into marketing the mini-series successfully, so that's the direction everyone is taking."

There'll always be people who think they can get rich by buying a dozen copies of some trendy № 1 and waiting six months.

Artist Rob Davis, currently working on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* for DC and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* for Malibu, feels much the same way. "I predicted nearly six years ago that this would be the major way stories are told in comics," he says. "With 'Doomsday' and 'Knightfall' at DC, my prediction is coming to full fruition. I expect this trend to last for quite some time. Because of the 'traditional' way comics are ordered by retailers (issues one through four are ordered highly, with orders dropping off after that), I expect there will be innumerable four-issue mini-series as this trend continues."

"I think 'event' programming will fall apart by 1995," argues Hibbs, "although it will remain the centerpiece of most publishers' promotional efforts in 1994."

Many of the pros think that the Ultraverse may represent the last successful new full-blown, interconnected line of publisher-owned titles. "Though the companies are still creating universes right and left, I suspect the marketing value of the 'universe' is dwindling rapidly," Grant says. "The legacy of Image now is that brand loyalty is pretty much a dead issue. So individual books will start living and dying on their own strengths, not on the strength of what they tie into."

And Lawrence Watt-Evans agrees, using much of the same language. "The idea of a huge, interconnected universe has also passed its peak— companies like Milestone and Malibu/Ultraverse are going to find that crossovers won't help sales significantly. A title will have to rise or fall on its own merits."

Both Ultraverse's Mantra #1 (left) and Milestone's Blood Syndicate #1 came polybagged with a trading card inside.

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Christensen concurs that brand loyalty is a thing of the past. "You no longer have Marvel Zombies. The same people buy Marvel, Image, Valiant, maybe even *Love and Rockets* or *Bone*. You don't have people trapped in a one-publisher mindset."

Everyone sees creator-owned titles as the wave of the future—although the manner in which those titles will be published is still a topic of discussion.

"Creator-controlled comics will be around for a long time, although the precise nature of the beast is something that time will determine," Bill Neville suggests. "I'd guess that the Milestone approach may be the way of the future...licensing characters to larger publishers who have the resources to promote the characters, and, if necessary, to defend the characters in a courtroom."

Mark Evanier, who works with Sergio Aragonés on *Groo* and *The Mighty Magnor*, predicts this will happen because the readers are tired of comics in which the creators have no emotional investment. "I think 'bloodless' comics are starting to run their course—that is, comics written with no particular passion," Evanier posits. "Any good writer can write a decent issue of any comic with a good premise...but that doesn't mean that they ought to. Often, the reason a writer is writing a certain ongoing comic is [because] he needed work and that book needed a writer. That is increasingly becoming, to the readers, not enough of a reason...even though they might not know precisely why the comic strikes them as so sterile."

Surprisingly, none of the creative types had any predictions as to what kinds of content would succeed or fail in the next 12 months. Retailer Hibbs was not so reluctant, however: "I think the next year will see the end of the 'darkening' of characters," he suggests. "DC's *Green Lantern* revamp is the last gasp of that trend. No one's going to care. I mean, no one really cares about Batman—they're talking about the stories, but it's all about how much they hate them. With Superman—which was largely about the ennobling of a character—they talked about how much they liked the story. I see more and more cartoony and positive-looking stuff in the catalogs. I think the reasoning DC presented in its *Justice Society of America* cancellation explanation is probably wrong.

"DC—and, for that matter, the other major publishers—have always been reactive and they always react six months late," Hibbs opines.

Hibbs' fellow retailers, Christensen and Seifert, disagree: "I think we'll see stuff get even darker—more of the Vertigo approach," Christensen suggests. "Those kinds of books seem to appeal to a wider audience than the 12- to 15-year-old males who buy superhero stuff. Clearly the superhero genre will not up and disappear; it will remain the major source of revenue.

"People are open to trying new things right now; no one would have been sampling *Bone* at the beginning of the year, and now we have lots of customers giving it a try."

On the business side, Watt-Evans sees the end to Marvel's long dominance of the market, in part because readers have finally realized that good comics don't come from just one company. "'The Big Two' is no longer a very useful concept; in fact, I think a serious decline in the whole concept of 'company loyalty' on the part of readers is under way. We aren't going to see 'hot companies' like Image or Valiant; we're going to go back to the far more sensible 'hot titles.' And they won't be limited to DC, Marvel, Image, Valiant, or anyone else. The tiny, fly-by-night outfits aren't going to move a million copies of some obscure title, but if some 'independent' hits the right combination, we could see hot titles from just about anywhere."

Hibbs, on the other hand, thinks that unremarkable superhero material is unlikely to find favor with the readers. "I think the new publishers that are trying to pump out new superhero stuff without any quality or talent are doomed. I think you have to be above the run-of-the-mill to survive. I thought Comics' Greatest World was very run-of-the-mill. I think the Ultraverse is slightly—ever so slightly—above run-of-the-mill. But there's a baseline quality there."

He also cautions publishers against diluting the audience for successful titles by creating multiple spinoffs. "I think the expansion of established character lines—such as the Superman and Batman and X-Men examples, with five or six titles featuring the same or related characters—is going to fail in the next year. I don't think there's a market for solo titles for some of these peripheral characters."

Similarly, Hibbs is concerned about the effect on the retail level of the continuing growth of the number of titles being published, and the prices being charged for them.

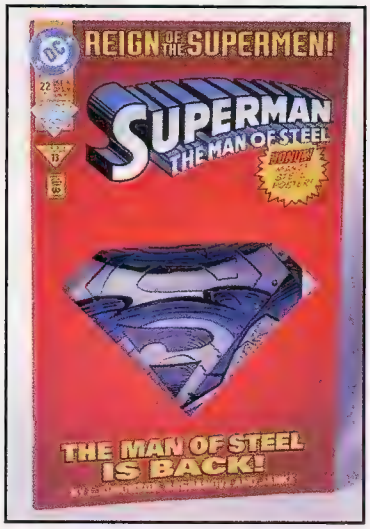
"It used to be that, if a customer made a commitment to buy a certain title, it was easy to keep it," Hibbs recalls. "Even if a book didn't live up to its hype, you'd probably buy it, because it didn't cost an arm and a leg to get everything. Nowadays, though, it's impossible to buy everything, so, if a book really isn't sterling, people are rejecting it out of hand.

"Two years ago, the average title sold 30 copies in my store; today, it sells maybe 15," he continues. "But there are three times as many titles. I'm selling a lot more comics, but fewer of each title.

"One of the worst trends for the future is the escalating cover price. It's gotten way out of control. Using our records, the average cover price is $3.00. Even eliminating the high-ticket trade paperbacks and such, the average is probably $2.25."

Christensen is not as concerned. "We

You don't have people trapped in a one-publisher mindset. The same people buy Marvel, Image, Valiant, maybe even *Love and Rockets* or *Bone*.



The Direct Sales version of DC's Superman: Man of Steel #22 sported a die-cut cover.

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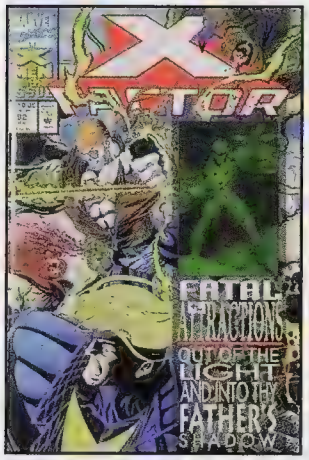
are in a period of rapid, explosive expansion in the industry," he agrees. "There are new companies coming in with big ideas—Majestic, Triumphant, Lightning. They are pouring incredible amounts of money into promotion, and we don't know if they can deliver or not. Clearly, those are risky propositions for the retailer. It is definitely a time for cautious ordering."

Noting the continual emergence of imprints, such as Legend at Dark Horse and Bravura at Malibu, both of which are lines of creator-owned superhero/action-adventure titles, Grant says that the success of these "designer labels" will depend on the quality of the work, not the popularity of the talent associated with them.

"Designer labels are clearly the wave of the future, unless the material turned out under them fails to win an audience," he predicts. "These labels have to be approached very cautiously by talent and publishers, with everyone's real 'best' work going into them. But if these labels start putting out books simply to cash in, as has been the case with every other innovation in this business in the past couple of decades, then audience interest will wane very quickly. Which brings us back to every title having to stand on its own. But content will never be a marketing gimmick, because it's the hardest element of a comic book—or anything else—to replicate, and the least dependable, and the most personal for the specific talent involved. The heart of mass market comics, from the publishers' point of view, has always been those elements that don't depend on the specific talent, but interchangeable product seems to be taking a hit these days.

"The only way any audience is going to be built and held by anything from here on in will be by going slow and building carefully," Grant sums up. "But I suspect the trend that will be in play is the trend that has always been in play: occasional breakthrough works followed by dozens of cheap knockoffs from everyone who's trying to sell a comic book, since it never seems to sink in that people are attracted to books for things beyond surface qualities. Nothing exceeds like success."



All X-books in this year's "Fatal Attractions" crossover featured a hologram on the cover.

All right, the experts have had their say—now it's my turn.

To start with, I agree with many of the comments above. Specifically, I think speculation has run its course. On the other hand, I was saying that a year ago, too—I hope I'm right this time. And I hope Brian Hibbs is right about the much-predicted bust not coming. Nothing could hurt this industry more than losing a whole bunch of retail outlets.

And if speculation is dead, it seems to me that gimmicks will go with them—except when the gimmick actually adds something to the package or fits with the concept in some way. I don't think trading cards packaged with the comic are a gimmick, per se; in that case, the publisher is actually giving the purchaser something extra. It's not unlike the toy a cereal maker puts in the box—it won't make the cereal taste any better, but the kid will enjoy playing with it after breakfast.

Similarly, I think using enhancements like "glow-in-the-dark" covers on suitable titles—such as *The Spectre* or *Sandman*—is a worthwhile idea. On the other hand, I've never seen a foil-enhanced or chromium cover that I thought added one iota to the appeal of a comic. If that stuff is gone for good, I'm all for it.

So everybody agrees that "content" is what will sell a book in 1994. But content is a terribly subjective thing. And so I think the market will continue to be as chaotic as Hibbs sees it as being. Who would have predicted two years ago that a style as unusual as Jae Lee's would be popular? Who would have predicted two years ago that a year's worth of storyline would turn Superman into one of the hottest characters in the market? The public taste is fickle.

Unfortunately, I don't think Hibbs is right about the end of the "dark hero" trend. I'd like to be proven wrong, because I think it is one of the ugliest things about today's comics. But I think most of the people currently creating comics grew up in a dark and ugly time in American life, and the characters they create will continue to reflect that.

That may mean that older readers—like me—will desert the mainstream publishers for other fare...if there's other fare to be found. I've yet to see a new action-adventure or superhero character from Ultraverse or Dark Horse or anywhere else that grabs me the way my first reading of *Green Lantern* did 30 years ago. And everyone keeps saying the adult audience is the future of comics.

The only way any audience is going to be built and held by anything from here on in will be by going slow and building carefully.

As for the ascendance of creator-owned comics: This is the third time in the 20 years I've been collecting comics that I've heard this one. The first time was 15 years ago, when *Elfquest* and *Cerebus* were breaking new ground. "This is it," the creators all said. "In ten years, we'll all own our own stuff and the company-owned characters will only exist for licensing deals." Years later, with Eclipse and Dark Horse and even Epic making deals with name creators, the same arguments were made. And now, after Image and the formation of Legend and Bravura, I'm hearing it again.

And yet, the most successful new line launch of 1993—the one everybody talked about and the one that had a packed booth at the conventions—was Malibu's Ultraverse, a publisher-owned line of comics.

So who's right about all this? I don't know. In some cases, I'm rooting for one set of predictions; in others, I'm hoping for a different outcome. One thing's certain: some of these concerns will still be on our minds in January 1995. ☆

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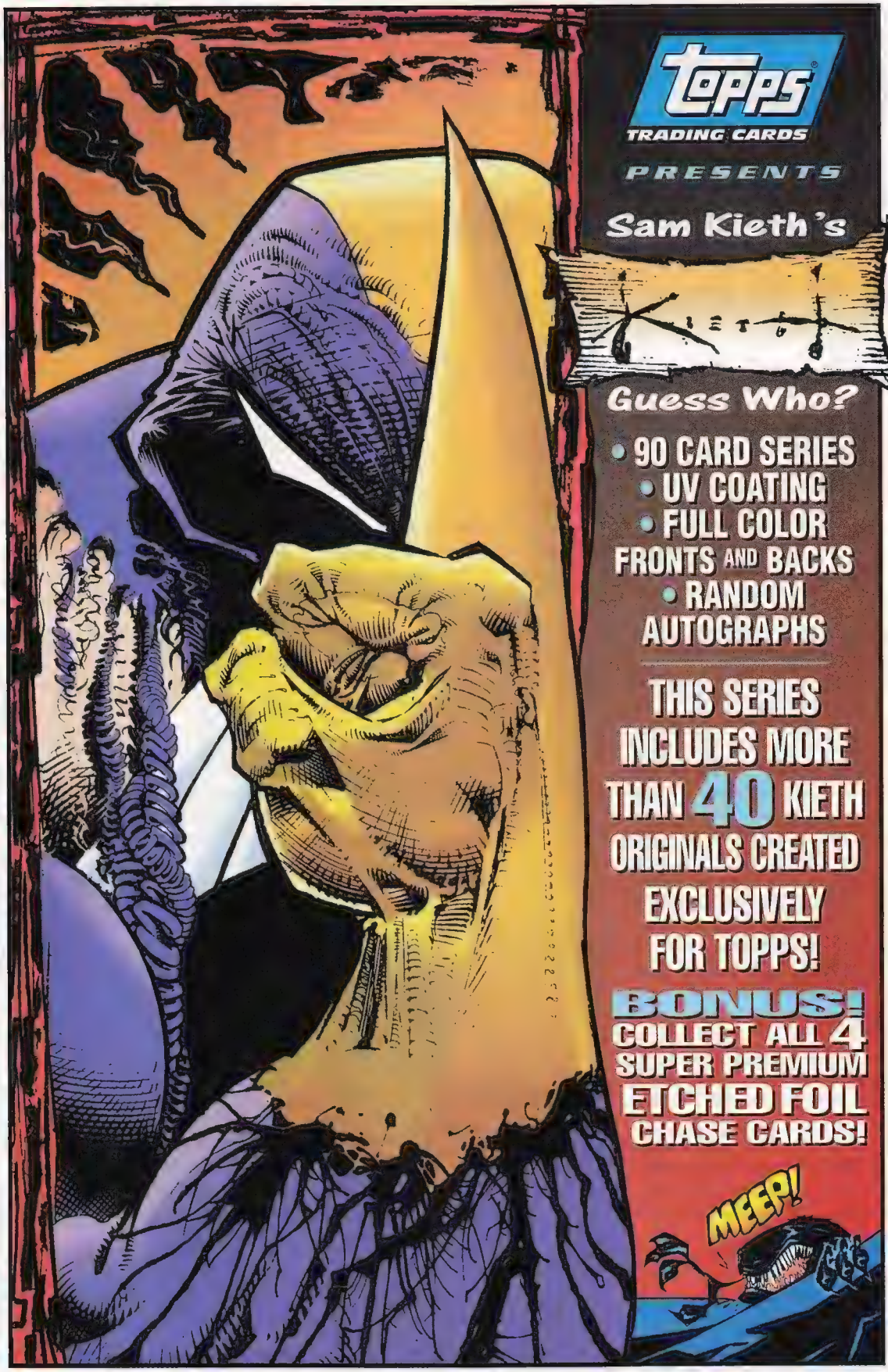
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Lament for the Lost

A look back at the comic titles that bit the dust in 1993

By Andrew Steven Harris and Patrick Daniel O'Neill

1993 saw unprecedented expansion in the comic industry. New lines of comics from Dark Horse, Malibu, Mirage, and Milestone made their debut, along with two entirely new imprints from Marvel Comics alone. Marvel and other established companies like DC, Valiant, Image, and Continuity, also pressed forward with heavy promotions of previously existing lines.

But when the industry exploded, some titles got burned by the blast. Like any war, the market fight among the major publishers left casualties, and with more comics being published than ever before, there were more to be canceled. Some were canceled unjustly, some with good reason, and others were just experiments that were either ahead of their time or, occasionally, behind the times.

Here are the final fates of some of your favorite comics produced by the industry's main publishers...

Dark Horse Comics

Dark Horse's activity this year was mostly expansion, not contraction. Its track record is helped by the fact that many of its projects appear as mini-series, and several of the properties—particularly the licensed ones, such as Aliens, Predator, Terminator, RoboCop, and Indiana Jones—could probably sustain ongoing series on their own anyway. (Perhaps Marvel, which canceled three licensed series this year, could learn a few tricks from this bunch.)

Young Indiana Jones was one of Dark Horse's few unsuccessful licensed comics. Its difficulty may be related to the lackluster performance of the television program upon which it was based, despite reasonably good critical response. Dark Horse might also have felt that after the TV show's cancellation, the comic title had outlived its appeal.

One of the more controversial "cancellations" of the year was that of *The Blue Lily*. The mini-series debuted to outstanding critical and popular praise, but only two of its four issues were published. Dark Horse may resolicit the final two issues in the future.

Like many other titles this year, *John Byrne's Next Men* undergoes more of a transformation than a cancellation: Byrne will discontinue the ongoing series format and publish *JBNM* as a sequence of mini-series, since Dark Horse has had some problems getting the books out on a monthly basis. This new format will allow him to work on his upcoming *Danger Unlimited* series and other side projects. Byrne wants to avoid falling behind schedule, a trademark of some popular independent creators.

Spade wants to know if the final issues of The Blue Lily will ever see print.

DC Comics

DC made thunderous inroads in the comic book market share this year, thanks to what some say was a Marvelesque approach: it subjected its prominent characters, including Superman and Batman, to brutal and angst-ridden storylines, while shearing off those titles, such as *The Justice Society of America*, which didn't fit its new '90s facade. And unlike Superman and Batman, few of these other characters will return.

Of the most interesting of DC's 1993 cancellations was the critically acclaimed *Justice Society* series, which ends with issue #10. Despite decent sales, DC felt that the book was too "old-fashioned" for today's comic readers. DC editor Mike Carlin, in response to one of many angry letters sent by fans of the title, wrote, "this is a commercial business... whether we like it or not... and we must make decisions we feel will help strengthen the DC Universe. And not all of these decisions will be based on sales. Some will be based on vision and forward movement....

"Unfortunately, it is our feeling that a title like the *JSA* will only reach a limited readership... we feel our responsibility is to the 'audience' [in its entirety]."

Rusty Spade ™ & © Angus McKie. She-Hulk ™ & © Marvel Comics. WildStar ™ & © Al Gordon & Jerry Ordway. Flash ™ & © DC Comics.

WildStar couldn't hold up under the pressure.

Hawkworld has undergone a transformation, moving away from its tales about the planet of Thanagar to focus on the adventures of its most prominent raptor in the new *Hawkman* series. The new title will have a darker, more predatorial theme.

Another concept undergoing transformation, as opposed to permanent cancellation, was *Aquaman*. DC pulled the plug on it after only a short while so that it could launch yet another mini-series that will lead into yet another ongoing series. Readers who manage to keep track of the title's contortions will be treated to the writing of Peter David. DC, meanwhile, will reap the market benefits of having a few more first issues on the racks.

Green Lantern: Mosaic attempted to expand the family of Green Lantern titles; perhaps its failure signifies that the popularity created by the revisionist *Green Lantern: Emerald Dawn* mini-series has expended its momentum. Many disliked the execution of this series, though kudos still go to DC for attempting to market minority superheroes, who are virtually nonexistent among books from major publishers (outside of DC's new Milestone Media imprint).

Another effort by DC to expand the diversity of its headline heroes, this time with a female lead character, *Black Canary* failed to generate the same excitement as the mini-series which preceded it. Talented writer Sarah Byam has moved on to write *Elfquest: Hidden Years*.

Black Condor was another canceled book with a dark-feathered bird theme, which just doesn't seem to work out for DC, does it? Despite interesting stories by Brian Augustyn and attractive art by Rags Morales, the tale of this eclectic hero from DC's past failed to take flight in the market.

Like *Black Condor*, *Peter Cannon: Thunderbolt* featured a character which DC purchased from a defunct publisher many years back and which failed to catch on. Given the poor sales of *Captain Atom*, *Blue Beetle*, and now *Thunderbolt*, it's unlikely any of the other ex-Charlton Comics heroes will see print from DC.

Image Comics

Perhaps the most-publicized cancellations of the year came from the company which has grabbed the spotlight in all other areas of the industry since its inception. While Image's notoriously late shipping may have made it seem like most of its line had already been canceled, five of its titles—all from the second generation of high-profile Image creators—actually did get the axe.

Shaman's Tears represented one of Image's first efforts to allow seasoned industry veterans into the company, this one being Mike Grell. Ultimately, though, Image let him in for only two issues, canceling the book despite widespread critical praise. Creator Grell and his collaborator Mike Gold now intend to take the series to another publisher and hope to have the book on track again in February.

Artist Larry Stroman (who caught Image's eye with his work on the mutant book *X-Factor*) and his partner and writer Todd Johnson only managed one issue of the stylish *Tribe*. The pair now claim to be the first creators to have left the Image stable intentionally. They will be publishing further issues of *Tribe* under their own Axis imprint, and they'll also be marketing some clever merchandise stemming from the book.

Keith Giffen is the only creator to remain in the Image stable (on a work-for-hire basis) after the cancellation of his series. His Loboesque protagonist, Trencher, will continue to appear in the Image Universe, particularly in Jim Valentino's *Images of Shadowhawk*. But even that future remains uncertain: Valentino has voiced his dissatisfaction with Giffen's missed deadlines (*Shadowhawk* remains the only Image title never to have shipped late) and has even pulled solicitation of the title when Giffen failed to deliver on time. A new publisher, Blackball Comics, will print Trencher's further adventures beginning in March.

While technically not a cancellation victim, since *WildStar* was only a mini-series, creators Jerry Ordway and Al Gordon apparently expected to launch an ongoing title at the mini-series' conclusion, which was what happened with virtually every other Image book. Instead, the title will wrap with #4; plans to continue his adventures have yet to be finalized.

Stupid, from former Liefeld artistic collaborator Hilary Barta with Doug Rice, parodied Image books but was not appreciated by Image artists. According to Todd McFarlane, whose Spawn character was parodied in *Stupid*'s first issue: "*Stupid*—was stupid."

Malibu Comics

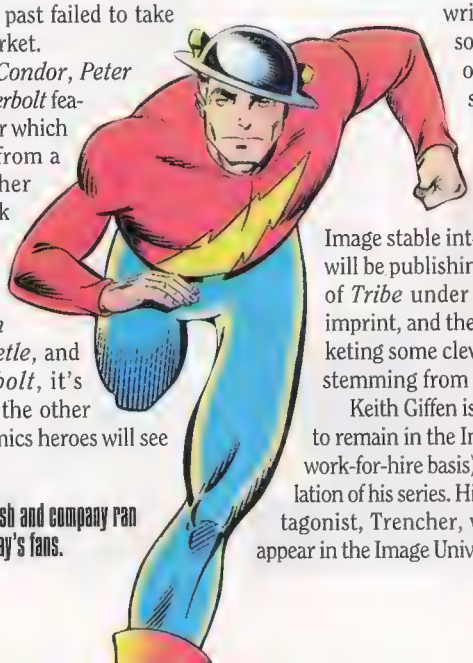
For an in-depth look at Malibu's most prominent canceled title—perhaps the most notable cancellation of the year—see the sidebar on *Exiles*. One other "final issue" from Malibu is worth noting.

Captain Harlock has only appeared in mini-series format, but the publication of the last issue of the most recent series marks the end of Malibu's license for the property. The owner is reportedly planning a new Harlock project in Japan, and has allowed some licenses to lapse.

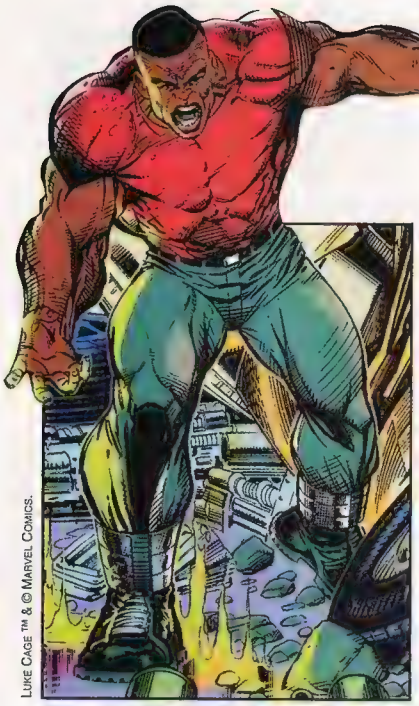
Marvel Comics

Dan G. Chichester is perhaps Marvel Comics' unluckiest writer. Three of his books—*Terror, Inc.*, *Nightstalkers*, and the Hellraiser title *Pinhead*—were canceled this year. It's certainly no measure of Chichester's talent: his "Fall From Grace" storyline in *Daredevil* remains one of the most sought-after stories of the year. Perhaps the unlucky run comes from the fact that all the canceled titles dealt with the supernatural.

Marvel's long list of canceled comics is no surprise, since it is the most prolific comics publisher ever. Still, some of Marvel's cancellations felled high-profile books, ones that were heavily marketed when they first appeared. Many of the canceled books were licensed properties—never one of Marvel's strong suits—and several were part of Marvel's effort to market Marvel UK books in the United States.



The old-fashioned Flash and company ran out of steam with today's fans.



Luke Cage™ & © Marvel Comics.

Somebody at Marvel better watch out—Luke doesn't look happy about Cage being canceled.

Part of the Midnight Sons family of titles, *Nightstalkers* is one of the highest-profile books to receive the pink slip. Perhaps it suffered from reader backlash against still more books based on big knives, big guns, and gratuitous guest appearances by "hot" characters. Strangely enough, Marvel announced its cancellation shortly before the title became part of a large-scale push for the revamped Midnight Sons line, which could have boosted its sales significantly. After the current "Siege of Darkness" storyline, an refurbished *Dr. Strange* will take *Nightstalkers*' place among the Midnight Sons family.

Another high-profile Midnight Sons title, *Ghost Rider/Blaze: Spirits of Vengeance* has not been canceled in the traditional sense; instead, like any good vessel of Zarathos, it will transform in a burst of flame into an ongoing series, *Blaze*. John Blaze, the original Ghost Rider and *Spirits*' main character, recently became prominent in the book's new logo. It is not certain if, though it is expected that, the new book will debut as a #1 so that Marvel will have the opportunity for another "new series" sales push.

Cage was to have been Marvel's new "hot" character, *à la* the Punisher and Ghost Rider. One of Marvel's "Big Guns" titles, *Cage* disappointed fans when it failed to deliver its heavily promoted "acetate" gimmick cover. (For an actual acetate cover, see Continuity Comics' premium for *Valeria, the She-Bat* #1, if you can find it.) The book did deliver some fine art early on as well as stories that abandoned the "blaxploitation" treatment of Luke Cage from years past. Retailers, though, dropped orders quickly and the book never caught on. Perhaps that was because the new Cage bore little physical resemblance to the Power Man of old, so readers simply didn't recognize the character. (And Marvel never did explain how Cage sat down while wearing that funny metal belt—yowch!)

Dark Angel had problems finding a title that didn't already belong to someone else; it began as *Hell's Angel*, which brought legal action from the well-known motorcycle organization, then became *Dark Angel*, which was already used by Boneyard Press. Perhaps it should have been called *Fallen Angel*, since not even gratuitous X-Men guest shots in virtually every issue could generate enough interest to keep the series airborne.

Warheads—like *Dark Angel*, one of the initial books bearing the Marvel UK imprint—was the first such title to receive its cancellation notice. Both *Warheads* and *Dark Angel* will continue to appear in upcoming mini-series from Marvel UK.

Canceled yet not canceled, the adventures of the "left coast" version of Earth's Mightiest Heroes ended with issue #102. Perhaps the problem from the very beginning was that the left coast never knew what the right coast was doing. Many of the West Coast Avengers will reassemble in *Force Works*, which illustrates the tendency to use two powerful words to create a title regardless of whether or not it makes any sense.

Writer/artist John Byrne gave *Sensational She-Hulk* a singular personality, and his controversial arrivals and departures brought the book more readers and publicity. Still, there are only so many different ways to break the fourth wall, and after 60 issues Marvel will give Jennifer another extended rest. And no, don't worry; she won't be coming over to rip up your *X-Men* issues.

Licensed characters have become hot properties in the comics industry—unless the license goes to Marvel. Perhaps the weakness of this film's premise—does Robert Townsend really seem like the spandex hero type to you?—was the main factor in the book's low sales, or perhaps the poor showing at the box office explains reader disinterest. Or maybe, as with *Cage*, Marvel still hasn't figured out how to have a minority character headline a comic book.

The licensed *Hellraiser: Pinhead* received its cancellation notice before the first copy hit the stands, indicating some internal problem in Marvel's production of the book or approach to it. Only a few issues about *Hellraiser*'s main Cenobite bad guy will appear.

The silver-bordered one-shot *Marvel Milestone* reprints of Marvel's history-making comics will be no more. It seems as if Marvel's continued emphasis on how great it is right now has made current readers completely uninterested in the history of the characters.

The quarterly *Marvel Super-Heroes*, featuring previously unpublished stories from Marvel's stock files, will also be terminated. Marvel probably realized there was a reason these stories didn't see print the first time around—or maybe they've cleared out their inventory.

Yet another Marvel licensed project, this time based on the comic book from the Bob Newhart TV show *Bob*, *Mad Dog* had an interesting flip-book format: one side featured the "original" wholesome Mad Dog while the other side had the "Liefeldized" version of the character from

Tek World™ & © William Shatner.

the show. The series is returning to the air *sans* comic book element, and *Mad Dog* the comic book has also passed away.

Despite convention and TV talk show appearances by The Man himself, Marvel's licensed comic of *William Shatner's TekWorld* appealed to hardcore Shatner cultists only.

The annual *Marvel Illustrated* magazine published in the format of *Sports Illustrated* will not see another issue.

Mirage Comics

The company which launched the most successful independent concept in the history of comics is relaunching itself with a new presence in the marketplace. Look for a new line of color titles, a new company logo, and comics published under the appropriately titled "Next" imprint.

The turtles weather the storm, and will return in a new full-color second series.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles™ & © Mirage Studios.

Mirage, the first modern independent company to hit it big, will revamp the series that started it all. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* will trade in their trademark black and white for an all-new full-color second volume. The original series moved toward greater continuity and creative consistency as it drew to a close, setting the stage for a new era of your favorite three-adjectives-and-a-house-pet quartet. ☆

Andrew Steven Harris is a freelance writer and law student based in San Diego, Calif.

EXILED!

Exiles™ & © Malibu Comics Group.

You've seen it a hundred times: The front of a comic book proclaims the death of one of its heroes, cover copy trumpeting, "Not a hoax! Not a dream!"

More often than not, the unlucky character will eventually be reincarnated, resurrected, or somehow brought back with the creative indulgence of a bizarre soap opera plot twist.

With *Exiles*, however, Malibu Comics' Ultraverse has managed to break all the rules: They've found a way to kill off its new super-team, and even though the characters are permanently gone, their deaths are part of an unusual hoax that has taken in not the story's characters but industry retailers, distributors, and consumers.

While the creators planned to destroy the Exiles from the beginning, dramatically ending the series with issue #4, they didn't want the industry's usual gossip to destroy the surprise for their readers. But they wouldn't be able to avoid speculation if solicitations for that book suddenly stopped with #4.

Their solution: plant false solicitations in catalogs for retailers and consumers, keeping the destruction of the team a closely-guarded secret and pretending that *Exiles* would be continuing along its merry way.

"*Exiles* #5: With Amber Hunt on her rampage, it was surely the end of the Exiles—but things are not always as they seem! In the aftermath of the death of a fellow Exile, the rest of the team mysteriously disappears from Exile Island as they fall victim to the twisted wit of the vile Hoaxster and the Carnival of Lies!"

A clever inside joke for those who knew, but that solicitation may have broken precedent in more ways than one—while companies have previously concealed surprise stories with evasively worded solicitations, they've never before solicited a comic book that they knew from the start would never actually exist.

"We wanted to create a sense of excitement, something that's never been done before," says editor-in-chief Chris Ulm. "One of the things that we're trying to do with the Ultraverse is get an additional editorial value without an increase in cover price, to give the readers more than they bargained for."

The readers may get that, but what about the retailers, who committed part of their budgets to books that were never supposed to exist, and who could have spent that money on other titles that would have brought them profit? Is Malibu concerned about a backlash from them?

Not particularly, says Ulm. The maneuver will give retailers a "hot book" that will sell well, along with giving them a valuable addition to their back issue market. And because *Exiles* #4 was solicited several months before the title's cessation was announced, only a fixed number have been printed, so there won't be the glut that occurs with most hot books, either.

"We are sending a letter to every retailer on the list explaining exactly what happened—nobody will be left in the dark—and they can use it as a store event to promote the book," Ulm explains. "We want the awareness to be very high, very direct."

So it's just a sales gimmick, then?

"No," Ulm emphasizes. "None of the announcements were made until after *Exiles* #4 was ordered. We didn't want to exploit the marketplace, say 'buy our book,' tell people everything that happens and inflate the orders. Sales are already fixed from our standpoint.

"But from a retailer standpoint, I want there to be excitement, I want them to sell through. I want [the books] to sell off the stands and go to happy readers. I wanted them to be reader-friendly, not speculator-friendly. I wanted them to go up in value because of content, not because of cover gimmicks. Our interest is in rewarding the core readership."

The story should indeed thrill readers, since it kicks off the Ultraverse's first mega-event crossover, *Break-Thru*. The story arc, which chronicles the demise of some of the Ultraverse's most popular characters, begins at the end of *Exiles* #3 with the death of an Exile. It careens towards an explosive—and, for the rest of the Exiles, fateful—finish in *Exiles* #4.

"Not all of the characters die," Ulm says. "There's a high death count, and some die, some are changed forever, some have things happen to them that will that linger on throughout. In a way, it's somewhat similar to the origin of the original X-Men, in which they set out to find other people like themselves, and then with no training they are thrown up against adversaries while they are still wet behind the ears.

"What normally happens in comic books is that all survive and everything turns out fine, but that's not what happens here. They're like a young platoon in Vietnam, and they get chewed up. When they make a mistake, it's not a mistake that just causes a cliffhanger; it's a serious mistake. All hell breaks loose, and everything changes."

The approach, Ulm says, is part of a larger strategy for the entire Ultraverse line.

"We wanted to send out a very clear message: You don't know what's going to happen in the Ultraverse titles.... Don't underestimate us—we're always doing more than what we say we're doing."

—Andrew Steven Harris

CONTESTATION

Win the complete set of Kenner's* Batman®: The Animated Series *toys – the Batcave™ Command Center, the Batplane®, the Robin™ Dragster, the Batcycle™, the Joker-mobile®... and more!

CONTEST N° 3

CONTESTATION

Batman®: The Animated Series™!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families and Adam West. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code on an " Official Entry Form", a 3x5 index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Batman: T.A.S. Contest, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent of substitution prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 17, 1994. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly-completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 18, 1994 by Wizard Press.
For a list of winners, available after February 1, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Batman: T.A.S. Winners", P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

Wanna own the entire line of Kenner's Batman: The Animated Series line of action figures and accessories, all for the price of a stamp? Before we get into the how, here's what you can win...

Grand Prize (one winner)

A complete set of Kenner's *Batman®: The Animated Series* line of toys, including every action figure, vehicle and playset! You'll get Combat Belt Batman®, Turbojet Batman®, Robin®, Two-Face™, Penguin™, The Riddler™, Sky Dive Batman®, Man-Bat™ (who is *Wizard*'s figure of the year), Joker®, Bruce Wayne™, Infrared Batman®, Scarecrow®, Catwoman®, Ninja Robin®, Mech Wing Batman®, High Wire Batman®, the Hoverbat™, Batsignal™ Jet, (man...this list goes on forever...) B.A.T.V.™, the Batcycle™, the Jokermobile®, the Robin™ Dragster, the Batmobile®, the Batplane® and the Batcave™ Command Center!

Second Prize (three winners)

A *Batman®: The Animated Series* Batmobile with a Batman and Robin action figure.

Third Prize (25 winners)

A copy of DC Comics' *The Batman Adventures*, the comic book based on the hit *Batman®: The Animated Series* television show, signed by artist Ty Templeton and writer Kelley Puckett!

How to win...

All you have to do is fill in the below official entry form (or a 3x5 index card or a standard postcard) and mail to:
Batman: T.A.S. Contest, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey NY 10952-8001.

Name _____

Age _____ Phone # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Store name (where you buy your comics) _____

Store address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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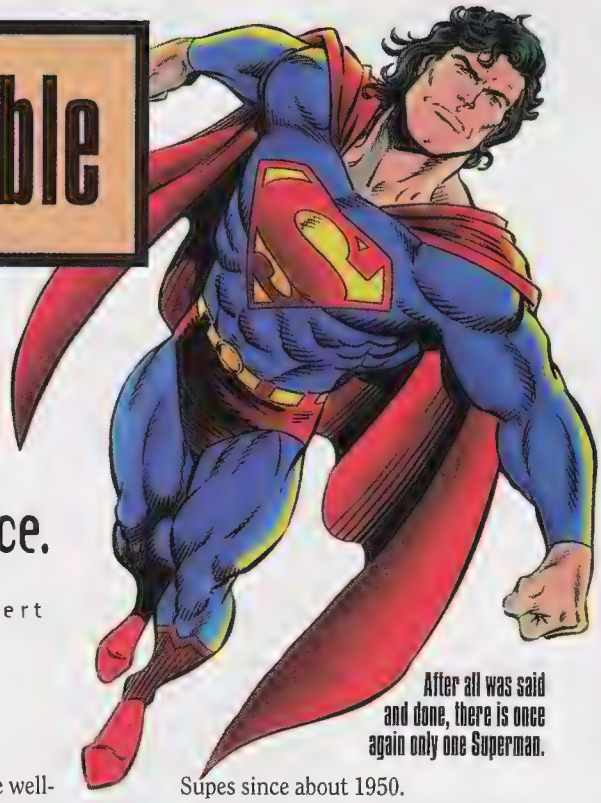
Hardly Recognizable

The real challenge today's superheroes face in the ever-changing comic book marketplace.

By William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert



After all was said and done, there is once again only one Superman.

Comic book creators face a problem that is unique to their particular brand of literature. Their characters are forced to live in the present, in *our* present, throughout their entire careers. Heroes who don't keep up with the times will quickly find themselves becoming dated, at least in the eyes of readers.

Of course, there will always be Tommy Tomorrows and Enemy Aces, guys who almost by necessity can stand still in time. But most comic characters are challenged by something far more threatening than even their foulest villains. In order to compete with the new heroes who are always coming along, they've got to change with the times.

1993 was a year of great change in the comic industry. The marketplace experienced a period of growth unprecedented in comic history. Comicdom is no longer a two-horse town. Several publishers—notably Valiant, Image, Dark Horse, and Malibu—have entered the race, and are giving Marvel and DC a run for their money. The consumers also changed, with the vast amount of new product prompting new ones to enter the market, and old ones to alter their buying habits. The size of the comic market virtually doubled over the course of a year.

Of course, none of these developments could have occurred without modifications in the nature of comic books themselves—changes (again) triggered in part by those dynamic new publishers. Faced with competition from original heroes at Dark Horse, Image, and Malibu, some of the well-established heroes at Marvel, DC, and Valiant were forced to change. With the alterations ranging from cosmetic touch-ups to switches in the identities of the characters themselves, 1993 will go down in history as a year of startling transformations. Here's a list of some of the changes which a few popular characters have undergone during the past year.

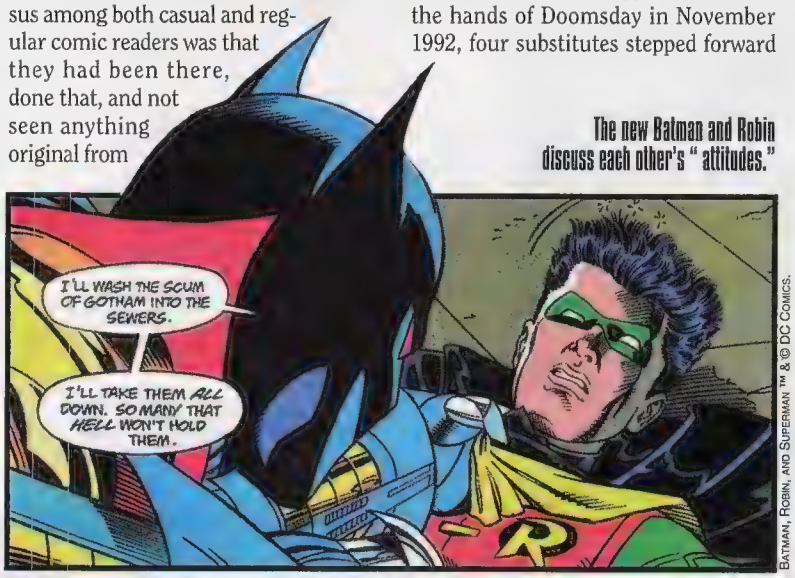
Superman

Superman was known and loved by millions—or was he? Despite starring in four regular titles which contained solid editorial content, Superman was largely ignored by comic fandom and the public at large. The general consensus among both casual and regular comic readers was that they had been there, done that, and not seen anything original from Supes since about 1950.

Perhaps the biggest complaint leveled against him over the years concerned Superman's awesome power and invulnerability. Superman was the ultimate no-flash, all-substance hero. At times, he's been literally unbeatable, and an unbeatable character can get pretty boring after a handful of adventures, let alone after the thousands of comics in which the Man of Steel has appeared. From time to time, DC has attempted to tone down Superman's power levels in an effort to make his adventures more interesting, but, inevitably, a few months later he'd be back to pushing planets around and brushing off nuclear explosions.

After Superman's apparent death at the hands of Doomsday in November 1992, four substitutes stepped forward

The new Batman and Robin discuss each other's "attitudes."



BATMAN, ROBIN, AND SUPERMAN ™ & © DC COMICS.

to try to fill the big guy's shoes. However, in 1993, the real Superman was able to cheat death because of his peculiar Kryptonian physiology and a little help from the Eradicator. After his miraculous resurrection, Superman seems much more aware of his own mortality; expect more emphasis on the Clark Kent side of the coin in the future. After getting his and Kent's personal life in order, he seems eager to get on with the job of being the world's greatest superhero—and with becoming Lois Lane's husband! Just as Superman caused a comic boom when he first appeared in 1938, his death and resurrection 55 years later have also had a profound impact.

Batman

Batman is another superhero with a lot of history behind him; as with Superman, that history proved to be his downfall. When a character has starred in at least two monthly books for more than 50 years, what more can be said about him? The Dark Knight has his core of devoted fans, but to the masses, he just seemed to be going through the motions.

In 1993, Batman met Bane, someone as intense as Batman himself. Born and raised in a third world prison, where he was subjected to medical experimentation by his keepers, Bane's early life served both to warp and to harden him. When he turned the tables on his captors and escaped from prison, he headed straight for Gotham to take on the only opponent he considered worthy of his attention—the Batman.

Bane's first tactic was to blow up Arkham Asylum, thus freeing all of Batman's enemies. Once Batman was worn down from battling his rogue's gallery, Bane stepped in for the kill, inflicting a debilitating spinal injury. While Bruce Wayne searches for a cure for his broken body, another man has taken his place as Batman: Jean Paul Valley, who previously served as Azrael, the avenging angel of the order of St. Dumas. Jean Paul, "programmed" in the ways of armed and unarmed combat, has already proven to be even more vicious a Batman than Wayne ever was, and his new high-tech costume reflects that.

Robin

Robin has really been displaced over the past few years. He fulfilled his purpose perfectly when he was created in 1940 to help younger kids identify with Batman's adventures, but times have changed and so has the comic-buying public. Not only have comic buyers gotten older, but younger readers have become both more sophisticated and more bloodthirsty; they no longer need a kid their age to attract them to superhero books.

As a result of these changes, Robin has gone through some major transformations over the years. The first Robin, Dick Grayson, went solo as Nightwing, and the second, Jason Todd, died during the infamous phone-in-your-vote "Death in the Family" story. The current Robin, Tim Drake, seems determined to stand on his own as a superhero. In fact, he no longer has any choice: Jean Paul Valley, the new Batman, doesn't feel the need to bring a sidekick along on his adventures. He locked Robin out of the Batcave and told him in no uncertain terms that he's to stay out of this Batman's way. Now out in the cold, Robin still seems determined to clean up Gotham City Bruce Wayne's way, even if Jean Paul won't. Expect a few conflicts between the two as a result of this philosophical difference.

Daredevil

Even after almost 30 years, Daredevil has never been able to shake his image as a second-string hero. Always in Spider-Man's shadow, and perennially compared to Batman, Daredevil has managed to survive over the years—despite being opposed by the lamest rogue's gallery in comics—by transforming himself from a Silver Age hero to a modern hero. Instead of concerning himself with threats like the Owl and the Purple Man, Daredevil has gone for the Punisher-esque approach, taking his fight to the streets. He now defends his little corner of New York from the likes of street gangs, drug lords, and organized crime.

After wearing his old red costume for nearly 320 issues, Daredevil finally decided that the escalating level of violence around him justified more functional gear. Daredevil's new togs are padded and contain a variety of offensive weapons. Daredevil did pretty well during his first outing in the new threads, against a demon version of himself. Bigger trials are yet to come, however, as his current storyline seems destined to end with the return of his old flame, Elektra.

Colossus

Colossus has always been one of the meekest, best-mannered heroes in the business. He's always done what he was told and has always wholeheartedly supported Professor Xavier's dream of a day when mutants could coexist peacefully with humans. But despite his unassuming manners, Colossus has never been afraid to do what he felt was right, and that's what triggered the latest changes in his life.

Colossus' little sister Illyana came down with a strange mutant virus that was unleashed on Earth's mutant population by Stryfe. Despite the best efforts of Professor Xavier, Illyana died. It was a big blow to Colossus, because he and his sister had given up a normal childhood and family life to join the X-Men. Colossus felt that Professor

COLOSSUS AND DAREDEVIL ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC.

Xavier and the team had let him down, and, deciding that the Professor's dream could never work, joined forces with the X-Men's greatest foe, Magneto.

Wolverine

Everyone's favorite mutant berserker was the prototypical hero of the '80s. His no-ethics, no-regrets, and take-no-prisoners approach to life endeared Wolverine to a new breed of comic reader. The air of mystery surrounding Wolverine's past has also been a big part of his appeal, but lately, the revelation of a few too many false memory implants has readers wondering if his entire life has been a dream.

WOLVERINE™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC.

Wolvie's gonna need some serious recovery time!

During Magneto's final confrontation with the X-Men, the more-powerful-than-ever Magneto yanked all of the adamantium out of Wolverine's body. He was able to do this to Wolverine's supposedly unbreakable bones by converting the adamantium into an unstable state and then simply extracting it. Apparently, Wolverine still retains some of his skeletal structure, and it's possible that his mutant healing factor will replace the lost adamantium with normal bones, but it remains to be seen if the berserker can cope with such a debilitating injury.

Iron Man

Iron Man is certainly no stranger to changes. Numerous upgrades to the Iron Man armor aside, he's overcome a drinking problem, has alienated his fellow Avengers by pretending that Tony Stark was no longer Iron Man, and has even lost his financial empire, Stark International, a time or two.

Stark has certainly been through the wringer, but the most telling blow recently has been an attack by a microchip secretly implanted in his nervous system. Effectively paralyzed, Stark was unable to function without substituting an extensive set of electronics for his central nervous system. After pretending to be dead, he and his trusted technical staff were able to come up with a permanent substitute for his now-useless nervous system. Tony's right-hand man, Rhodey, has taken a bigger hand in Stark International and has also been wearing the Iron Man armor again (he has previous experience). Tony has designed a meaner "War Machine" version of the armor for Rhodey; it packs a lot more firepower than previous versions. Tony himself has yet another armor upgrade, which he can either wear himself or control via remote.

Magnus, Robot Fighter

Since being raised and trained by his mentor, 1A, Magnus has been content to protect North Am and Earth from rogue free-will robots who believe that they will never be able to co-exist peacefully with humans. It's the task he was born for, and he relished it; Magnus once liked nothing better than a good tussle with a 'bot, even if it did possess real intelligence. However, Magnus eventually discovered that not all free-will robots were evil.

Just as Magnus was beginning to feel that free-will robots might have a right to life, the Malevs invaded Earth. The Malevs come from a giant robot planet that accidentally gained sentience, much as robots on Earth did. They intend to enslave humans and make Earth their new home. To make matters worse, Magnus' girlfriend, Leeja, has lately shown interest in Rai, who may be the most powerful human on the planet in the year 4000. What's a poor robot fighter to do?

First off, he got himself armor that offers more protection than did his flimsy red tunic. Secondly, his robot companion, 1A, reconfigured himself into a bird so he could easily accompany Magnus on his adventures; in this form, 1A has also been able to make a positive contribution to the fight. Lastly, Magnus may have found a replacement for Leeja in the robotic Tekla, who has adopted Leeja's form. Magnus and company have been holding their own against the Malevs, though Magnus has been upstaged in the battle by Rai.

Rai

Rai's traditional role has been spirit guardian of Japan. In the year 4000 in the Valiant universe, Japan has become the ward of an intelligent robotic entity known as "Grandmother." Grandmother created Rai to protect her people; the role of Rai was passed down through generations of the same family.

During Valiant's *Unity* crossover, Grandmother was critically injured, and was eventually forced to become a separate, smaller entity. The last Rai was destroyed while fighting for his people during the same mini-series. A few months later, Takao Konishi was infused with the "Blood of Heroes"—blood containing nanomachines that can control any type of electronics, which originated with Bloodshot—and he became the new Rai.

As it happens, this Rai was also a Harbinger, with the ability to inspire other humans. The new Rai has done the enemy much damage during the Malev War, and they consider him their greatest threat. His Harbinger ability makes him a natural leader, and he and the Future Force are humanity's last, best hope against the Malevs. This responsibility has weighed heavily on him, however: he is occasionally unsure of himself, which causes his Harbinger ability to falter.

X-O Manowar

Aric has been able to acquire years' worth of learning in just a few months, thanks to the aid of the X-O Manowar armor. During that time, he has changed from a Roman-era Visigoth who couldn't even communicate in the modern world into the owner and CEO of Orb Industries, one of the world's richest and most advanced technology corporations. So far, he's been able to use his warrior knowledge and barbarian instincts to make it in the modern world.

After surviving *Unity* and getting a taste of the treachery and treats of modern life, Aric got fed up with civilization and decided to get back in touch with his roots. He turned the X-O Manowar control ring over to Randy Cartier, his security adviser at Orb Industries, and went to South America to try to recapture the feel of his former life. It didn't take Aric long to hook up with a primitive South American tribe and regain his bloodlust.

For her part, Randy was initially afraid of the power of the X-O armor. But the renegade Harbinger Sting and his cohorts forced her to use it to defend herself. Not only has she since grown accustomed to it, she's learned to revel in the power that X-O can give her. Aric may not have an easy time of it when he wants to get the armor back! ☆

William A. Christiansen and Mark Seifert are regular contributers to Wizard.

KINDRED
ISSUE #1
ART
BRETT BOOTH
SAL REGLA
STORY
JIM LEE
BRANDON CHOI
SEAN RUFFNER
FIRST IN THE BLOCKBUSTER
GRIFTER/BACKLASH MINI-SERIES
Regla
image

Necrology

Remembering those who passed on in 1993

By Andrew Steven Harris and Patrick Daniel O'Nei

Wizard mourns the passing of its industry peers, and we take some time here to list their accomplishments and recognize the loss their death means to the comics industry.

Harvey Kurtzman

One of the most influential individuals in the comics industry, Harvey Kurtzman, died in his sleep in Mount Vernon, N.Y., on February 21 at the age of 68.

Kurtzman's accomplishments are too lengthy to list in detail. He is best known for his work on EC's *Mad*, serving as one of the primary creative forces who propelled the comic book and the subsequent magazine to decades of greatness.

A native New Yorker, Kurtzman studied at the High School of Music and Art and later at Cooper Union. His first professional work was for Ace Comics on features like "Magno" and "Unknown Soldier" in 1943. In 1945, he moved to Timely, where he produced the one-page "Hey, Look!" series of fillers.

Kurtzman joined Bill Gaines' EC line in 1950, editing and writing the science fiction comics; later he created *Two-Fisted Tales* and *Frontline Combat*, almost single-handedly writing and laying out these tales of war and adventure.

In November of 1952, bedridden by jaundice, he looked for something he could write from his sickbed. The result was *Mad*, a comic book that poked fun at other comics, TV shows, movies...just about anything in American culture was fair game. Kurtzman stayed with *Mad* through its transition to magazine format, leaving in 1955 after a dispute with Gaines.

After his work with *Mad*, Kurtzman went on to expand his horizons, creating the short-lived adult humor magazines *Trump*, *Humbug*, and *Help!* In October 1962, he developed "Little Annie Fanny" for *Playboy*, successfully bringing humorous comics to a new audience.

His most prominent recent work includes a hardcover graphic novel, *Hey, Look*, produced by Marvel Comics in 1993, on which Kurtzman collaborated with other famous comics artists to showcase his enduring wit and comic genius.

Alden (Al) McWilliams

Comic strip and sometime comic book artist Alden (Al) McWilliams died March 19, in Stamford, Conn. He was 77.

Working in the Raymond/Williamson school of drawing, fans knew McWilliams for a slick line style and realistic technique. After first working with several lesser-known comics publishers in the 1940s, McWilliams received his big break on the "Twin Earths" strip distributed by United Features. He went on to create *Davy Jones' Locker* with writer Sam Leff in 1961 and *Dateline: Danger* with John Saunders in 1968. Comics historians credit the latter strip as being the first adventure strip to feature a black character in a lead role.

McWilliams did extensive work for Dell/Gold Key during the 1960s and '70s, including a stint on an adaptation of television's *I Spy*, which he acknowledged as the inspiration for *Dateline: Danger*. More recently, he worked as the final artist for Gold Key's well-known *Star Trek* series.

Brandon Lee

In one of the most infamous and controversial deaths of the year, Brandon Lee, son of the martial arts star Bruce Lee, died of a gunshot wound to the midsection while filming a movie adaptation of the cult comic book series *The Crow*. Lee died in the early afternoon on March 31 in New Hanover, N.C. He was 28.

Lee received a single gunshot wound from a prop gun which was supposed to be loaded with blanks. The shooting occurred while the cast and crew were filming a sequence in which Lee walked through a door and was fired at by an actor standing about five yards away.

Guns used as movie props are usually real firearms which can be loaded with real bullets. During filming, however, they are nearly always loaded with blanks that contain explosive charges but which shoot no metal projectile. Initial reports suggest that while prop men removed live bullets from the weapon and replaced them with blanks to ready the gun between takes, a projectile somehow remained lodged in the barrel and was launched when the trigger was pulled.

A criminal investigation is still underway, however, and the exact circumstances of Lee's death have yet to be determined.

Lee's father also died in mysterious circumstances which remain in dispute to this day. *Dragon*, a 1993 movie about Bruce Lee, included scenes of Brandon Lee as a young boy, and was dedicated to the younger Lee in the opening credits. *Dragon* was completed and released before Brandon's demise.

Brandon Lee's unfortunate death was but one of a sequence of accidents which occurred during the filming of *The Crow*. An electrician was electrocuted earlier in the shoot, leaving him permanently disabled; suspicious fires and crashes occurred; and a hurricane destroyed large parts of the set. *Entertainment Weekly* dubbed the accidents "The Curse of the Crow."

The Crow, created by James O'Barr, was originally published by Caliber and later reprinted in trade paperback form by Tundra.

Marjorie Henderson Buell

Marjorie Henderson Buell, creator of *Little Lulu*, died May 30 in Elyria, Ohio. She was 88.

"Marge," as Buell was known, created the character of Little Lulu in 1935 for a weekly strip in *The Saturday Evening Post*. She took Lulu to the daily comics pages in 1944.

Marge retained all rights to the character throughout her career, and licensed it for many properties, including a long run of comics published by Dell/Gold Key, as well as toys, animated cartoons, and commercials. Western Publishing, the corporate parent of Gold Key Comics, acquired the rights to *Little Lulu* upon

Marge's retirement in the late 1960s.

Lulu served as the advertising mascot for Kleenex Tissues until 1960. The character was also featured in a series of cartoons made by Paramount in the 1940s.

Robert Shayne

Actor Robert Shayne, a veteran of television, movies and Broadway, familiar to comics fans as Inspector William Henderson on TV's *The Adventures of Superman*, died November 29, 1992. He was 92.

Shayne's other TV credits included parts on *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *The Doris Day Show*, and a recurring role as Reggie, a blind news vendor, in the 1990 TV series *The Flash*.

He also appeared in 100 films, beginning with *Keep 'Em Rolling* in 1934 and ending with Disney's *The Million Dollar Duck* in 1971. His other films include *Hollywood Canteen*, *Mr. Skeffington*, and *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Shayne summed up his attitude about *The Adventures of Superman* in *Superman: From Serial to Cereal* by Gary Grossman. "Those television days wiped me out," the actor said. "I guess everyone else on *Superman* and any other show would tell you how we'd come home late after playing these one-dimensional characters, only to repeat it again the next day. It was work, hard and long; a terrible business when things go wrong, a rewarding career when things go right."

V.T. Hamlin

Vincent T. Hamlin, creator of the comic strip "Alley Oop," died June 14. He was 93.

Hamlin conceived of the garrulous and quarrelsome caveman in 1932; his strip debuted that year in the *Des Moines Register and Tribune*. "Alley Oop" hit its stride, however, in 1939, when Hamlin introduced Professor Wonmug and his time machine, sending Alley, his girlfriend Oola, and assorted inhabitants of prehistoric Moo on adventurous trips through the fourth dimension.

Hamlin drew "Alley Oop" until 1973, when he handed it over to an assistant, David Graue. It is currently written by Graue and drawn by Jack Bender. The strip, which is syndicated by Newspaper Enterprise Association, now appears in about 700 newspapers nationwide.

The very first comic book and comic strip fan awards, the Alley Awards, were named for Hamlin's creation and recognized Alley Oop as an early superhero prototype. ☆

GET IN LINE!

Common scenario: there you are, standing in front of the magazine rack, and big as life, there it is, the empty space where *Collector's Sportslook* should be. If you're lucky, the store clerk is kind enough to sell you his last copy, the one he'd been keeping behind the counter for himself. Not! So you ask, "You got any more copies of *Collector's Sportslook*? They reply, "You want *Sportslook*, so does everyone else. Get in line, buddy." Sounds all too familiar.

Four issues into existence, we have already become the most sought-after magazine for collector cards and sports memorabilia. No wonder: we have the greatest coverage of the latest sports and non-sports trading cards on the planet. Each and every issue is filled from cover to cover with fabulous informative color pictures. And above all, *Sportslook* has a price guide worthy of Wizard Press, the same people who revolutionized price guides in the comic book industry. We set out to create the most complete magazine of its kind, so you'd better hurry—lines are forming at a rack near you.

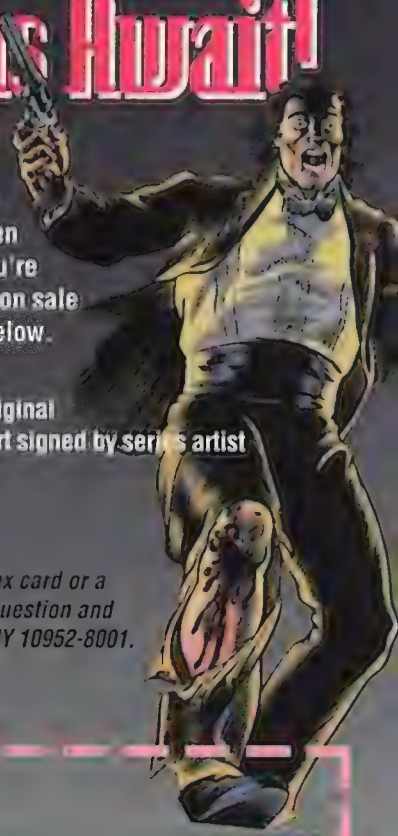
WIZARD AND SPORTSLOOK ™ & © 1993 WIZARD PRESS.

PHOTO BY TIM FOUNTAIN

CONTESTATHON

WIZARD '93 ANNUAL ISSUE 29

Parts Unknown Aliens Await!



[illegible] Entry Form", a 3x5 index card or a standard postcard. [illegible] Mail each entry to Parts Unknown Contest, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent of substitution prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 17, 1994. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly-completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 18, 1994 by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after February 1, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Parts Unknown Winners, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

The sequel to the original *Parts Unknown* finds the heroes from the first series, Pendleton Spurr and Maria Lucci, once again embroiled in an alien plot to enslave the population of earth! While you're checking out *Parts Unknown: The Next Invasion* (on sale now from Eclipse), try your hand at the contest below.

Grand Prize

The original art from the first seven pages of the original *Parts Unknown* series, with each page of original art signed by series artist Brad Gorby and series writer Beau Smith!

How to win?

Just fill out the official entry form below (or a 3x5 index card or a standard postcard), answer the Parts Unknown trivia question and mail to Parts Unknown Contest P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

Name

Age Phone #

Address

City State Zip

Store name (where you buy your comics)

Store address

City State Zip

Question: What was the name of the alien commander on earth from Parts Unknown?

CONTEST No 4

Parts Unkown ™ Beau Smith; Story © 1993 Beau Smith; Art © 1993 Brad Gorby and Randy Clark

? ? ? ?

WONDER

is the foundation of all philosophy.

—Montaigne

? ? ? ?

In the beginning, it was a sense of wonder — a bright spark of the imagination — that gave rise to comic books and the comics business.

We, too, have wondered ...

We wondered what it would be like to offer new comic books by mail. Then we wondered what it would be like to be better at it than anyone else. Now we find ourselves wondering how to improve every aspect of our new comic collector service, from shipping to quality control to customer service.

Our company philosophy is based on wonder, a fact of which we are all very proud. We think Montaigne would be proud too. After all, he thought of it first.

Wonder how you can save money and enjoy collecting comics more than ever? Call or write us today for free information on our comic book subscription service.

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A Comic Odyssey

If you thought 1993 was a hectic time for comics, leap ahead ten years and see what the industry will be like in the year 2003. By Rob Samsel, William A. Christensen, and Mark Seifert

McFarlane Buys Marvel

Comic book mogul Todd McFarlane has completed a deal with corporate raider Ron Perleman to acquire a controlling share of Marvel Communications Group. McFarlane, who will be the company's CEO, named longtime friend Dave Sim as his vice president of marketing, and veteran comics writer Alan Moore as his editor-in-chief.

When asked what new directions he was planning for the company, McFarlane responds, "See, we're gonna be growing roses here, and I don't plan on selling any roses to the dealers who are ruining this business. Like I've always said, if I could gut them like the pigs they are, I would. Well, now I can."

McFarlane clarifies that remark with the announcement that he has also acquired Capital City Distribution. "These retailers are going to have to meet my standards to get my comics," he says. "If I don't like 'em, screw 'em—they ain't gonna be sellin' a lot of books."

Moore outlined Marvel's upcoming editorial plans in a press conference earlier this month. "I think many people are expecting me to gut the Marvel line upon my arrival," Moore says, recalling the bitter dispute in the early '70s over his use of the name "Marvelman" in the U.K. "But, in fact, I am going to give the reins of the superhero line over to Todd. He has a multitude of plans for crossover projects such as *Spawn/Spider-Man* and *Spawn/Sabretooth*. He and I will even be collaborating on a few projects. Todd wants to give Mary Jane Watson Parker Osborne Thompson Mellencamp her own title. He will be drawing and I will be writing that. In the wake of Spider-Man revealing his identity to the public a few years ago, we will be taking a humorous approach. I am really not interested in writing straight superheroes, so Spider-Man himself will be very much in the background.

"The first issue involves Mary Jane accidentally encountering Spider-Man's old enemy the Vulture while making a trip to her bank. Of course, she thoroughly demolishes him, since he is really just a lecherous old man. The point being, she is far more at risk just by being a beautiful woman than she is by being Spider-Man's ex-wife, and she has learned how to handle herself. [Former Legend creator] John Byrne has expressed an interest in working on this as well, so we may go with a back-up feature in each issue with Mary Jane/Wanda Blake team-ups or something of that nature. It will be a pleasant change for everyone involved."

Moore's only other hero-related project won't be quite so lighthearted. "I would also like to do a sequel to *1963*," Moore reveals. "This time we will skip 10 years into the future and call it *1973*. The contrast this time will be between some of the horrific heroes that were prevalent at Marvel in the early '70s—heroes like Ghost Rider, Werewolf by Night, and Son of Satan—and some of the horror and occult characters that dominate that genre today. Whereas in *1963* I had to fabricate—so to speak—the 1963 characters to work against actual 1993 characters, this time I will be using actual 1973 characters and fabricating 2003 characters. Obviously, I've had experience with these kinds of characters—like Swamp Thing and John Constantine—but I think it's progressed even beyond that, and so we will get an interesting contrast.

"One of the first things I will be doing in my new position will be using the entire staff and resources of Epic to complete *Big Numbers*. I have written all 1300 pages of it—12 episodes," Moore notes. "What I have contemplated doing is assigning two or three artists to each episode, and hopefully one of them will turn in a finished product before retiring."

McFarlane has equally ambitious plans for the superhero line, which he plans to reduce to 500 titles by the end of this year. "It's not that I think that's too many titles," McFarlane claims. "But I'm just trying to clear out a little space to make room for new Spawn titles—y'know, roses need room to grow and get sunshine—so what I'm doing is just weeding out a few titles, just a little gardening. By this time next year, Marvel's gonna be just like that Monty Python sketch—'What's on the menu?' '*Spawn. Spawn Unlimited. Spawn's Pal Jimmy Olsen. Marvel Spawn-in-One.*'"

Dave Sim feels he has the skill to handle the job as Marvel's marketing VP, despite the fact that his own title, *Cerebus*, did not involve a single cover gimmick. Sim laughs, "I did *Cerebus* with no gimmicks and in black and white for 26 years. I think I can handle this gig."

Since going public in 1991, Marvel has been one of the most volatile properties on Wall Street. Perleman successfully fended off a hostile takeover attempt by home shopping network QVC in 1995, and was himself foiled in 1998 when the SEC successfully blocked his purchase of Marvel's chief rival, DC Comics.

Liefeld Ends Sabbatical

Rob Liefeld, whom long-time *Wizard* readers may remember as one of the founding members of the now-defunct Image Comics, has announced his return to the world of comics after a 10-year absence. Liefeld, who left Extreme Studios in 1993, will return to Extreme, now a major comic company, as publisher.

In a gracious nod to Extreme's founder, Extreme president Louise Simonson announced that from now on, all Extreme books will carry the words "Rob Liefeld Presents" above their titles, much as Marvel currently prints "Stan Lee and Jack Kirby Presents" above its titles.

Photo by Al Ortega.

While Liefeld has no Extreme comic book projects currently scheduled, Simonson says that he will be involved in the *Bloodblood* animated cartoon in an advisory role, and will act as a creative consultant on all future Extreme film projects.

Robby still looks 22—what's his secret?

CBNAC Buys Time on Super Bowl

The Comic Book National Ad Council has bought five 30-second spots during Super Bowl XXXVI. At $3 million per 30-second spot, this is easily the largest purchase by the CBNAC since its formation in 1995. Steve Massarsky, president of CBNAC, says that while beating out Budweiser was expensive, "it was worth it simply to put an end to those tedious 'Bud Bowl' commercials."

Massarsky adds, "It could have been worse, but since Steve [Geppi, Diamond Comics Distributors CEO] owns both Super Bowl teams, he pressured NBC into giving us a break."

Warner Books Gets Vertigo

Death ™ & © DC Comics.

Find your pennies: Death goes for best seller list!

Warner Books, a division of the same corporation that owns DC Comics, recently announced that it has reached an agreement with DC to publish a line of prose bearing the Vertigo imprint.

According to Vertigo editor-in-chief Karen Berger, the move makes sense. "We've defined a whole new genre of fiction here over the past 10 years, not just a new kind of comics," she says.

The first Warner Vertigo offering will feature Death, one of Vertigo's most popular characters. It will be written by Death's co-creator, Neil Gaiman, who hasn't written the character since 1995's *Death Takes a Holiday* mini-series.

Voyager Communications Acquires Disney

Jon Hartz, Voyager CEO, announced that Voyager Communications has finalized the corporate merger of entertainment giants Walt Disney Entertainment and Voyager Communications. "The new crossover possibilities are unbelievable," Hartz says. "Imagine a Harbinger/Huey, Dewey, and Louie crossover or *Turok: Muppet Hunter*."

Already on schedule for 2004 is a four-part mini-series called *Herbie the Love Bug vs. Magnus, Robot Fighter*. Magnus discovers that the source of all intelligent robots was a free-will Volkswagen accidentally created in 1968. He and Leeja go back in time to destroy the diabolical machine.

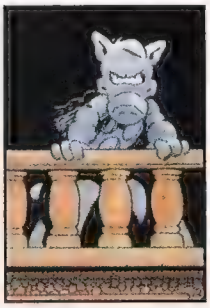
Spider-Man Film To Laserdisc

After numerous delays and three years of post-production, Marvel announced that *Spider-Man: The Movie* will finally see theatrical release, but only in selected European markets. It will be released on laserdisc later this year in the U.S. Marvel CEO Todd McFarlane says, "Hey, it's a lemon, no matter how you splice it!"

McFarlane added that the forthcoming *Spawn* movie "will not suck like all the other Marvel movies have." Marvel's acquisition of Paramount Pictures last year gives the company a greater degree of control than it has had in the past.

Cerebus Ends

Having filled 300 issues over the course of 26 years, Dave Sim's saga *Cerebus* has concluded on schedule. It ended with Sim's hero, Cerebus the Aardvark, dying alone and unmourned, killed by his missing brother.



Cerebus ™ & © Dave Sim.

After 300 issues, Cerebus looks over the edge.

Apparently unmoved by his creation's demise, Sim says, "I've been doing *Cerebus* for a long time, and it's time I've moved on to other projects. As crazy as it sounds, I am very pleased with the new position of marketing VP at Marvel Communications." (See lead news story.)

Kitchen Sink Buys Fantagraphics

Kitchen Sink Press finished up its purchase of Fantagraphics earlier this month, thus completing its sweep of the remaining independent comic companies.

Denis Kitchen, Kitchen Sink's president and founder, has been acquiring small comic publishers for the past decade, including Tundra, Continuity, Eclipse, Innovation, Now, and Warp Graphics.

"The acquisition of Fantagraphics adds a whole new dimension to our potential," says Kitchen. "We should have Simon Bisley penciling *Eightball* and Daniel Clowes doing *Mr. T and the T-Force* before the end of this year."

Comics' Greatest World Relaunch

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, Dark Horse Entertainment's Comics' Greatest World is being relaunched in the format it began with 10 years ago. Old and new characters from the superhero universe will star in this all-new 16-part mini-series.

According to Mike Richardson, Dark Horse president and CEO, this time the slogan will be, "Sixteen books, 160 bucks!"

Harris Announces Z-Unit

"It's the Q-Unit of the 21st century," says Jonathan Rheingold, Harris' marketing director, referring to the team which started the Harris "Unit" sensation in 1994. The new publication represents the culmination of 10 years of the proliferation of the Unit titles, which now includes Units Q through W, Y, and now, with the new *Z-Unit* title, Z.

Wizard readers may recall Harris' extended legal battle with Marvel in 1999 over the title *X-Unit*, which ended when Harris agreed not to use 'X' in its title in exchange for Marvel's cancellation of their long-running *Quasar* title. "If they get a lock on 'X,' then we get to monopolize 'Q,'" Rheingold said after the settlement.

Harris made good on that promise by expanding the original *Q-Unit* into a whole group of titles, which now includes

Q-Factor, *Q-Force*, *Q-Men*, *Q-Unit Family*, and *Q-Unit's Girlfriend Barbie-Q*. When asked recently how he felt about Harris' success, Rheingold replied, "I just wish we had started earlier in the alphabet."

Macaulay Culkin Signs On *Batman VI*

Amid an uproar of fan protest reminiscent of the commotion caused by the casting of Michael Keaton in the original *Batman* movie, Warner Brothers announced that actor Macaulay Culkin has signed a $100 million contract to star in *Batman VI*.

Keaton, who portrayed Batman in the first five films, doesn't seem disappointed. "It was kind of inevitable," the actor says. "I'm sort of patterning my career after [veteran actor and original James Bond] Sean Connery's at this point."

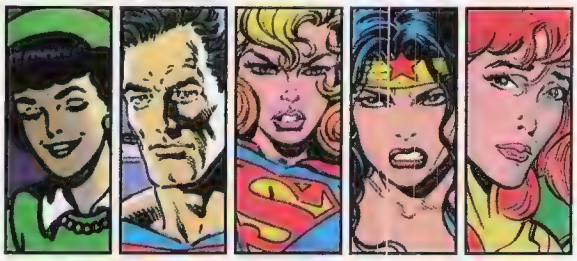
Shooter Starts Adamant

Since losing Defiant in a corporate takeover last year, Jim Shooter has been carefully planning his newest company, known as Adamant. Shooter says his company will launch the first of five titles in January of '04.

"The challenge, besides the obvious financial difficulties, is to come up with title names that haven't already been taken. The concept behind Adamant is that I will not lose control again," Shooter says, adding, "This time I mean it!"

Superman Divorces Lois

In a true sign of the times, Superman will be divorcing Lois Lane in January. According to Dan Jurgens, DC editor-in-chief, the split is in keeping with the humanistic side they've been developing in the eight Superman titles. "Lois and Superman had a good marriage for a while, but lately he's been realizing that she is going to grow old and die while he remains unchanged. That's a hard thing for both of them to come to grips with. We've always tried to emphasize the side effects of anything that happens in the titles, and this will be no exception," Jurgens says.



Lois Lane, Superman, Supergirl, Wonder Woman, Maxima ™ & © DC Comics.

The 16-part storyline will crossover into all of the Superman titles, and will culminate in *Superman Saga* #50, which will be available in both newsstand and polybagged versions. The latter will include divorce papers and a Kryptonian alimony check.

After that, DC will launch a follow-up storyline called "Here Come the Brides," in which the Man of Steel will seek a more suitable mate, this time in his Superman guise. "There will be three likely candidates," Jurgens says. "They will be Maxima, Supergirl, and Wonder Woman. I'm not going to give anything away, but personally, I'm rooting for Wonder Woman. After all, she has the body of a goddess!"

Wizard Looks Back...

Legends of Azrael

Few people in 1993 would have predicted that Jean Paul Valley—heir apparent to the title of Batman—would turn out to be Batman's greatest enemy.

After his controversial initiation in *Batman* #500, released in 1993, Azrael dealt his own brand of justice to the criminals of Gotham City, culminating in the death of the Joker in *Batman* #515. Shortly after that, Azrael-Batman brutally crippled Commissioner Gordon for interfering in a case. Then a rehabilitated Bruce Wayne wrested the rights to the cloak and cowl back from the former Azrael in the record-busting "Knightfight" storyline, which concluded in *Detective Comics* #700.

Azrael disappeared for six years, until *Adventures of Batman* #14, when it was revealed that after his defeat at Wayne's hands, he retreated to the Swiss Alps to further his training and plot his revenge. Now, beginning with the upcoming *Detective* #790, Azrael intends to take back Gotham and eliminate Bruce Wayne once and for all in the epic "Knightynight" storyline.

Valiant Gets Real

In what may turn out to be the ultimate comic book enhancement, Nintendo of America and Valiant have announced a joint venture that Valiant calls Valiant Virtual Reality Vision. Comics using the new VVRV process will look and read like normal Valiant comics until you plug them into Nintendo's new 256-bit game machine and don the VVRV glasses, which will ship in December. *Ninjak* #125 will be the first book to feature the VVRV technology. It will ship in January with a cover price of $49.95. VVRV glasses retail for $349.95.

Lois is out. The Man of Steel will choose a new squeeze.

COMPANY UPDATES

Archie Comics

Archie Comics has announced a series of covers by veteran Jim Lee for its long-running flagship title, *Archie*. "Apparently Jim has been an Archie fan since he was a kid," Archie editor Clive Barker says. "I can't wait to see the way he draws *Betty and Veronica*. *Hokum & Hex*, too!"

DC Comics

DC has hired veteran writer Peter David to oversee Iconoclast, its new superhero imprint. "We're sort of sectioning off our core group of heroes under an imprint and getting Peter to kind of keep things straight," DC Editor-in-Chief Dan Jurgens says. "After *Crisis III* two years ago, it became painfully obvious that we had to do something of this nature."

Dark Horse Entertainment

Dark Horse has announced that it has acquired the rights to do a series of comic books based on characters introduced in the upcoming *Star Wars* film. "We're very excited about this, because we'll be releasing some of this material—doing character backgrounds and so on—before the movie hits theaters next summer," says Dark Horse CEO Mike Richardson.

Defiant

Defiant's new *Plasm* series will feature issues executed in a variety of media.

"First of all, I'm extremely gratified to have the title back," says Defiant President Bob Layton. Layton is referring to the fact that Defiant can finally publish *Plasm* again now that Marvel, which won the rights to the book in the second of two notorious copyright legal battles, has failed to utilize the material for 10 years.

"We're going to go crazy with this," Layton continues. "Issue #1 will be a comic, but issue #2 may be a magazine, issue #3 might be a trading card set with an album, issue #4 may be a video, and so on."

Extreme

Extreme says the long-awaited *Deathmate Red* is finished and ready to ship. Valiant will be releasing a 10th Anniversary Commemorative Hardcover Collection of the rest of the series in conjunction with the event.

Malibu Comics

After lengthy negotiations with Ted Turner and his TBS cable television network, the Ultraverse television miniseries is finally ready to begin post-production. This project has been mired in legal red tape since the unfortunate accident in which Dolph Lundgren (playing Hardcase) and Fred Savage (playing both Prime and his alter-ego, Kevin Green) stumbled during a fight scene and plummeted sixty feet to the ground. Both actors were

COMICFEST 2003 REPORT

The winners of the 10th annual Wizard Fan Awards were announced this past October at the posh Honolulu Hilton in Hawaii. David Lee Roth introduced the presenters, as well as the evening's entertainment, super-group Nirvana and opening act Seduction of the Innocent. Here's a rundown on some of the evening's big winners.

• Favorite penciler was pulled down by long-time fan favorite Stephen Platt, hot on the heels of his *Legends of the Moon Knight* bookshelf-format smash.

• Favorite writer honors were grabbed by Fabian Nicieza, no doubt due to the fact that he is now writing more than half of Marvel's line of 500 titles, including the red-hot *Legends of the Moon Knight.*

• Favorite colorist and favorite letterer honors were both copped by the folks at Apple Computers, which was recently purchased by coloring conglomerate Olyoptical Chameleon. Macintosh's advancement in computer coloring and lettering technology have rendered the two jobs virtually obsolete.

• Favorite editor was DC/Vertigo's Karen Berger, working tirelessly on the massive 68-title Vertigo line, including the wildly popular *Saga of the Son of the Daughter of Swamp Thing.*

• Favorite inker went to the ubiquitous Jimmy Palmiotti, who inks the entire Valiant and Marvel lines, covers included.

• Favorite single story honors went to Frank Miller for his *Elektra and Batman in Sin City* one-shot crossover special.

• The winner for favorite story arc was Fabian Nicieza for his 612-issue one-month crossover, *Infinity Ad Nauseam.*

• Favorite ongoing title was won by the recently revamped *Rai and the Politically Correct Force,* the John Ostrander/Mark Moretti collaboration wherein the future Rai is now Ken Clarkson, Aric (X-O Manowar) Dacia's former ORB Industries partner. He became the new Rai when he found his husband Bloodshot on his deathbed, where the villainous Ax stood ready to usurp his blood. Ken's X-O powered artificial hand killed Ax and appropriated the "Blood of Heroes" from his slain spouse.

• The victor in the favorite one-shot specialty book category was shockingly not the aforementioned *Legends of the Moon Knight* bookshelf, but *Bane: Vengeance of Batman.* In this titanic tale, the Bruce Wayne Batman finally gets his revenge on Bane, who paralyzed him 10 years ago. Batman hunts down Bane, pummels him, and tapes him to a telephone pole outside PS #213 in Gotham, where he suffers Mrs. Crabtree's third graders to play "Pin the Tail on the Washed-Up Bad Guy" on his chest.

• Favorite mini-series was no surprise. Jim Valentino's blistering *Shadowhawk XXXIII: Nyah, Nyah, Nyah, None of You Bozos Know Who I Am!*

• Favorite publisher, the last prize of the evening, went to Kitchen Sink for their small-press monopoly.

Wizard Top Tens—December '03

Top Ten Artists

(name is followed by their current work)

1. Stephen Platt: *Moon Knight, Legends of the Moon Knight, Shadow of the Moon, Moon over Miami, Hey! He Mooned Me!*
2. Cyan McFarlane: *Barbie 2099*
3. Todd McFarlane: *Growing Spawn Roses*
4. Jim Lee: all 37 Homage titles
5. Joe Quesada: *Q-Unit*
6. Erik Larsen: *Savage Dragon*
7. Bart Sears: last 98 *Wizard* covers
8. Dale Keown: whereabouts currently unknown
9. Mark Moretti: *Rai and the Politically Correct Force*
10. Whilce Portacio: upcoming *WetWorks*

Top Ten Writers

(followed by their current work or a recent quote)

1. Fabian Nicieza: 259 Marvel titles
2. Shana David: *Barbie 2099*
3. Neil Gaiman: *Death, Sonic the Hedgehog*
4. Peter David: "Hey! What's my kid doin' ahead of me?"
5. Alan Moore: Not currently writing, but still popular for *Watchmen*
6. Frank Miller: *Sin City* mini-series
7. John Byrne: *Spawn,* upcoming *Spawn/Sabretooth*
8. Jim Shooter: "This time I mean it!"
9. Bob Layton: "I sell more books than all of these guys combined. What the hell am I doing down here?!"
10. John Ostrander: *Spectre, Rai and the Politically Correct Force,* upcoming *Tekla and the Bolt Babes* mini-series ☆

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seriously injured.

Tom Mason, Malibu VP, says, "We're just glad to have this sticky mess behind us. Editing is set to start next month, and I can't wait to see Winona Ryder as Mantra!"

Todd McFarlane Productions

"The loss of CEO Todd McFarlane to Marvel Communications doesn't mean we're going to stop creating comics," says TMP marketing VP Beau Smith. "We've got the creativity and the staff to find our way in the marketplace. There is definitely a niche for the small publisher in the marketplace, thanks to all the Kitchen Sink acquisitions."

First up from the Todd-less TMP will be a continuation of Eclipse's *Miracleman.* "I asked Todd to pull some strings with Alan to get the *Miracleman* rights," Smith explains. "We'll continue our numbering from the old Eclipse series." *Miracleman #27* will ship in January; it will feature writing and artwork by Barry Windsor-Smith.

Valiant

Valiant has hired Neal Adams as its editor-in-chief. "Neal has needed a situation where he can just kind of experiment with the medium and not have to worry about other things," Valiant president Steven Tyler says. "That's part of the reason he sold Continuity in '97."

In other Valiant news, congratulations are in order for star penciler Joe Quesada, who was married last month to the popular models known as the Barbi Twins. When asked about the unusual nuptials, Quesada exclaims, "Hey, if I'm doin' this once, I'm doin' it right! Nobody out there's gonna be able to say I should be committed for this one, baby!" The blissfully married trio are now honeymooning in Tahiti before traveling to their residence in Utah.

Wizard Press

The tenth annual Wizard/Valiant softball game is now history, and the Valiant crew finally ended their nine-year losing streak, waxing the Wiz Kids 18-0. Steve Massarsky, Valiant head honcho, later saying that he had had enough of his gang's losing streak, utilized his entertainment connections to the fullest before the game. Massarsky hired Ken Griffey Jr., Roger Clemens, and Frank Thomas as proofreaders earlier in the week, then deployed their talents for the big game.

This month's issue of *Wizard* (#149) marks the first issue of *Wizard* from new publisher Robert M. Overstreet. When asked what *Wizard* fans can expect from the new publisher, Overstreet states, "My first order of business is to get the rest of these *Maxx* #1/2s out."

In similar news, Harlan Ellison has been named *Wizard*'s new editor-in-chief, and when asked what changes we can expect in *Wizard,* he responded "Now that I'm in charge, there will be no more typos in *Wizzard,* or my name izn't Halran Elisson!"

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CONTESTATHON

The Eudaemon™ Wants You!

Pretty cool-looking buggers running around Manta Comics' *Eudaemon* series, eh? For a closer look (i.e.: owning the books yourself), read on and see how you can win some awesome Eudaemon stuff!

Grand Prize (10 winners)

A copy of the limited edition gold-foil *Eudaemon* #1, signed by series creator Nelson!

Second Prize (25 winners)

A set of the *Eudaemon* limited series (#1-#3), also signed by that Nelson guy.

Third Prize (100 winners)

A copy of *Eudaemon* #1, and yes, it's signed by the mighty Nelson!

How to win?

Simple. Fill out the official entry form below (or a 3x5 index card or a standard postcard), answer the Eudaemon trivia question, and mail to: Eudaemon Contest, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and that Nelson guy. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, the name of and information about the store where you purchase comics, and the answer to the Eudaemon trivia on an "Official Entry Form", a 3x5 index card or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Eudaemon Contest, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent of substitution prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 17, 1994. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly-completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 18, 1994 by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after February 1, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Eudaemon Winners, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

Name _____

Age _____ Phone # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Store name (where you buy your comics) _____

Store address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Question: What is the Eudaemon's human name?

_____

CONTEST NO. 5

Eudaemon ™ & © 1993 Manta Comics

Philly Phest '93

Philadelphia was the place to be Columbus Day weekend if you were a comic fan—that was when Comicfest '93 rolled into town.

By Marc Wilkofsky

Philadelphia never had it so good, and neither did comic book fans. Comicfest '93 hit Philadelphia, Pa., on Friday, October 8, 1993, and thousands of hobbyists of all ages and from all over the world were there to enjoy the exciting and festive activities and the plentiful and varied merchandise.

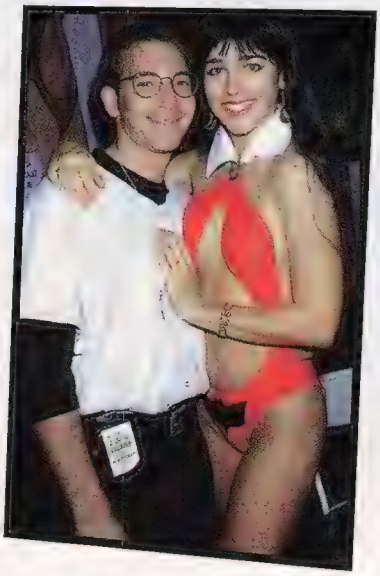
This was no ordinary comic book convention, not by any means. Produced by David Greenhill Productions and co-sponsored by *Wizard* magazine, it promised to be the largest convention in history—and it lived up to that promise. Many attendees, even veteran conventioneers, were incredulous at the number of exhibits, events, professionals, and retailer booths present at the action-packed four-day show, which was held at the sprawling Philadelphia Civic Center. Hundreds of exhibitors filled the enormous main hall; there were publishers like DC, Marvel, Image, Malibu, Dark Horse, and Defiant, as well as a virtual sea of retailers, large and small. An Artist Alley made up of over 200 industry professionals was set up at one end of the main hall for those who came with cameras and bags of signable comics in hand, while several more pros chose to speak with attendees at their respective publisher's booths.

Several of these publisher's booths featured absolutely outstanding designs, including Malibu's multi-screen television, which featured well-produced previews of its numerous products, and the large superhero murals at Marvel's and DC's booths. These last two booths were very popular with both youngsters and adults, most of whom recognized spotlighted characters like Superman and Spider-Man, and all of whom delighted in meeting and getting books signed by the talented creators behind these and other well-known heroes. At the Marvel booth, fans were even able to take pictures with actual heroes like Captain America and Wolverine.

Pages of forthcoming comic books were laid out in prepublication form at the majority of the comic publisher tables, offering readers a look at the next issue of their favorite series or a peek at new titles. Many publishers of comics and other magazines offered a wide variety of promotional materials, including posters, pins, and pamphlets, which were gleefully scooped up by hordes of ravenous fans. Defiant, a relatively new company, put its own promo in the form of a comic book, *Genesis*, which could be found in the goody-laden Comicfest bags distributed free to every attendee, and which company members like David Lapham and president Jim Shooter himself were pleased to sign.

These promotions, also available at several card and trade magazine company booths, ensured that most patrons had heavy bags to lug home. They also let collectors, investors, and retailers know what to expect from each company in the year to come. In fact, a two-day Retailer's Expo was held on the 6th and 7th, so that these professionals would have a clear idea of what hot products they should plan to stock in their stores.

Many of the publishers and creators commented that the number of attendees at Comicfest itself—which amounted to more than 30,000 over the four days—was truly surprising, and helped assure them that people are familiar with their products. Bob Harras, a Marvel editor who oversees the X-titles, commented that the show was "a lot of fun; there was a huge crowd, which



Pennsylvania artwork © Phila. Post Card Co.

All photos by Al Ortega, unless otherwise noted.

shows the strength of the industry. It's always good to see this many people reading comics, and it was great to see the kids wearing X-Men shirts; there's a new generation of X-Men fans. Seeing the crowds at the Marvel booth has been very gratifying. I'm very pleased." David Lapham, artist on Defiant's *Warriors of Plasm*, had similar sentiments. "This turned out really well—there's tons of people, and it's like San Diego East," he said, referring to the always-packed annual San Diego convention.

Steve Asvitt—owner of *Cardz & Comix*, in Troy, Mich.; editor of a new newsletter, *Press Release Previews*, published by Vantage Press; and also a collector—was very gratified by the convention. "The whole show, from the perspective of a dealer, a collector, and an investor, has been fantastic; it's really been enjoyable every single day," he said. "I've been here for the [Retailer's] Expo and the actual show. I liked the Expo a lot, because it wasn't open to the general public, so that you could see the booths without a million people around. They've had such a diversity of programs during Comicfest; every one of them has been great."

Yes, the programs. From company forums to movie previews, from lectures by pros to wild games, each and every hour of Comicfest was packed with something special to do or view. Despite the incredible number of events, however, several happenings did stand out.

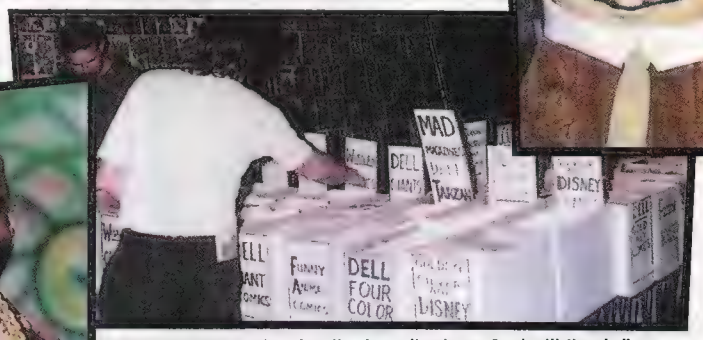
The main event on Friday afternoon was the much-hyped bout between the outspoken comic book writer and novelist Peter David and Image co-founder and Spawn creator Todd McFarlane. McFarlane, upset at the public treatment of his company by the media—specifically by David, in his "But I Digress" column in *Comics Buyer's Guide*—had called for a debate between the two, and David readily complied. The focus of the debate, which was moderated by artist/writer George Pérez, was supposed to be about the media's treatment of Image. However, as the capacity audience had expected, several verbal barbs concerning other subjects were thrown back and forth between the debaters.

Each debater had to reply to a series of questions, written before the debate by each participant, and asked by Pérez. One of the main points that came out in David's replies was that his columns are reactions to what he reads and hears, interpretations of what he sees. McFarlane, meanwhile, repeatedly mentioned that David's main criticism of McFarlane was that he was a liar, to which David replied, "I'm talking about internal logic." David used an example of McFarlane's quotes regarding the sales figures he'd accept, which seem to change regularly. McFarlane went on record as offering $5,000 to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund if David could find someone to whom he, McFarlane, had lied.

David later read a definition of the mental disease paralogia, which is marked by false, illogical thinking, and from which he accused McFarlane of suffering. The writer also read a published passage about a "paralogical man" who believed that he was Switzerland. The man's reasoning went like this: since he loved freedom and Switzerland loved freedom, they must be one and the same. In one of the debate's most memorable moments, David pointed in McFarlane's direction, and announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, I give you...Switzerland."

After several other heated discussions, including anticipated ones about subjects like story quality and on-time shipping, the debate came to a close. Two of the three judges decided that Image is being treated fairly by the media, and Pérez thanked David, McFarlane, and the judges for participating, and the audience for controlling themselves. McFarlane, in so many words, conceded the actual victory to David.

The overall response to the debate was that David did, in fact, bury his rival, mainly due to his fine verbal ability and agility, but that David was a bit too cynical and not receptive enough to McFarlane's comments. "Todd did hold his own, for the most part," said Michael Davis, one of the principals of Milestone Media. "It was gracious of him to admit that he lost in the end." Chris Kelley, of Waterford, Mich., commented, "I believe that although the Image people have been treated fairly by the media, anybody in their position set themselves up to have stones thrown at them." The debate proved to be an engrossing experience for all involved.



Across from left: Superboy gives the show a thumbs-up; Gareb with Vampirella; Nelson does the watusi; Mr. T pities the fool who didn't make it to the show; a comic fan digs for a bargain; and Yogi shows up...to try out for a position in Youngblood?

The long-awaited title fight took place.

The many faces (and bodies) of Todd McFarlane.

One of the most popular and eagerly awaited Comicfest events was the first annual Wizard Fan Awards, held on Saturday night. Awards were presented to the comic book creators and companies which *Wizard* readers judged to be the best in a national poll. Before the show, the over 1,500 audience members tried to predict which titles, characters, and professionals would take home an award. The trio of William Little, Ronald Petersen, and a visibly excited Trung Nguyen, all from Long Island, N.Y., correctly predicted 11 of the 21 winners.

Petersen said, referring to Comicfest as a whole, "Seeing the creators was the best part," so he and his friends must have thoroughly enjoyed what was to come at the Fan Awards: a wide variety of artists, writers, and companies accepting awards amidst music, laughter, and applause. The winners included Archie Goodwin and Scott Peterson, the Batman editors who tersely accepted the Favorite One-Shot Book award for DC's *Vengeance of Bane*. Goodwin said, "Thank you..." and Peterson said, "...very much."

Other winners had quite a bit more to say. Favorite Painter Joe Jusko declared, "I still can't believe how much interest my projects have generated. I'd like to thank everybody who voted for me." The "heaviest" speech came from *Uncanny X-Men* scribe Scott Lobdell, who accepted the Favorite Heroine award, which went to Rogue, in his best "Richard Gere at the Oscars" mode: "I'd like you to take the time to support the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund," he said, referring to an organization fighting for the right of comic book retailers to sell their products, no matter how controversial they might be. "We'd be nowhere without them," opined Lobdell.

Lobdell also praised Chris Claremont, who is known for revitalizing the X-Men mythos, and who, according to Lobdell, "single-handedly kept the entire comic book industry alive throughout the better part of the last decade." Spider-Man himself, accepting the Favorite Hero honor, thanked several other comic legends: Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, and John Romita Sr., along with "everybody who made me their favorite superhero."

As far as fan favorites go, one celeb owned the night: Todd McFarlane. He received awards for both Favorite Penciler and Favorite Cover Artist (for which he tied with Joe Quesada), along with Favorite Ongoing Title honors for *Spawn* and an award for the Dave Sim-penned *Spawn* issue (#10), which shared Favorite Single Story honors with *Sandman* #50. His several appearances caused the host, the hilarious improvisational genius Bob Zany, to joke that he was "glad to part of the Todd McFarlane Show."

The "McFarlane Show" was enlivened by the creator's several outlandish costumes. In his first appearance, he accepted the Favorite Cover Artist award as a wild Tina Turner lookalike, surprising and amusing the crowd. McFarlane noted that "Dr. Peter David completely neutered me," and announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, Miss Switzerland," as he walked offstage with a portable radio playing his "new theme song," Turner's "I Don't Wanna Fight." His other costumes included a full chicken suit, which he said he could have dressed in had he avoided the debate; and an underwear-only outfit, because, as he put it, "Peter David completely undressed me yesterday." McFarlane's actual speeches did include some kind words, and even humility: witness his Favorite Ongoing Title speech. "I'm happy to say that I was able to give a book to you guys that you guys like, and that I could do something that makes me happy," read the speech in part.

The event closed as Gareb Shamus, *Wizard* president and publisher, who received a standing ovation, presented the magazine's first Comic Book Hall of Fame award to long-time DC editor and noted comic book figure Julius Schwartz. Schwartz said proudly that he would "put this in my trophy room. Thank you very much."

Joe Quesada, winner of both the aforementioned Favorite Cover Artist and the Favorite Cover awards, was very pleased with the show itself. "I've been to dozens of award ceremonies, including the Oscars and Emmys, and this was the one of the best award shows I've seen. *Wizard* did a great job in making this enjoyable for both comic fans and the general public." He added, "Also, winning doesn't suck. Honestly, it was a surprise, an honor. It's really great just to be nominated. When fans take the time to remember you and your work, and write your name down on a ballot, it really means something." Quesada, along with the many pros and fans who attended, are all eagerly awaiting the second annual Wizard Fan Awards, which will be held next year at a time and location that have yet to be determined.

Yet another major crowd gathered to hear Saturday's lecture by science fiction writer Harlan Ellison, who related various personal anecdotes, including the tale of how he was fired from Disney after half a day's work, how he met his wife, and his uproarious appearance on the *Dating Game*, a segment which will never air. Ellison also related the story of how his original script for the award-winning *Star Trek* episode "City on the Edge of Forever" went through innumerable rewrites. "I let [William] Shatner read it, and he said, 'It's a good script, but it needs work.' He wanted more lines than [Leonard] Nimoy."

The prestigious writer also amused the crowd with his characterizations of previous coworkers, including one annoying secretary who "had a voice that

COMING TO THE IMAGE UNIVERSE IN 1994

CREATED BY JIM LEE

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could shatter cardboard." The proceeds from both this event and Jim Shooter's "How to Create Comics" seminar, in which Shooter and artist Alan Weiss spoke about the various methods of creating, writing, and drawing comics—methods which Shooter first learned from comic book legends—benefited the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.

Several other professionals took the time to speak with hundreds of fans in a variety of well-attended forums. DC sponsored five packed sessions, where they previewed their Superman, Batman, and Green Lantern books and Vertigo and Milestone lines. The attendees at most of DC's forums, which basically featured presentations of slideshows and question and answer periods with the creators, received a special gift as they left: a platinum or gold edition of a recent hot DC comic, among them *Batman* #492.

Attendees at other forums got to know the personalities of several behind-the-scenes staffers, including the very personable Defiant Publisher Clark Smith and witty Vertigo editor Lou Stathis. Marvel, Dark Horse, and Malibu also presented these forums. "Next time, we're going to try to get a few more fan panels into the mix," said Elayne Wechsler-Chaput, one of the program coordinators for Comicfest. "The fans were very happy with them."

There were several participation-oriented events, such as Friday evening's Malibu Comics' Casino Night, during which people played casino-type games and won chips which could be cashed in for special prizes. Young K.C. Asvitt, son of comic renaissance man Steve, was one of the night's lucky winners: "I got a Holographic *Prime* #1 and an Ex-Mutants cap, playing Blackjack," he said.

Marvel presented several fan-participation games on a smaller scale. In Marvel Overboard, which was hosted by Scott Lobdell and Bob Harras, players became actual game pieces on a large board of colored squares. Each color represented a different task the player had to perform, including answering trivia, making comic-related sound effects, or—the audience's favorite—acting out a special comic book scene, such as Sabretooth tongue-bathing himself. Those who were up to the challenge and stayed on the board for a certain length of time won special prizes like uncut cover sheets.

"This was a concept Mark Gruenwald started years ago; we always try to do various games at all the shows," said Harras. "Scott came up with the rules for each game. We basically want to show everybody that we're regular people, not just inaccessible guys who do comics; we're goofy guys." "Game-Meister" Lobdell added that since "the interactive games and CD-ROM videos [are] the big thing, we decided to produce an interactive, living game."

A special kind of entertainment for the eyes could be found throughout the center in the form of numerous exhibits. These included a display of original comic, cartoon and animation art presented by the International Museum of Cartoon Art, which has moved from New York City to Boca Raton, Fla., and Filmart Galleries' beautiful display of original sets from the Gumby show, straight from its museum in Plainview, N.Y. Those in the mood for big cars could have their picture taken while sitting in the original Batmobile or Todd McFarlane's brand-new impressive-looking Spawnmobile funny car. If that wasn't enough, patrons could also be dazzled by a fantastic pair of murals on each side of a 48-foot tractor-trailer, each one executed by members of the Cartoonists Across America for an effort to promote literacy.

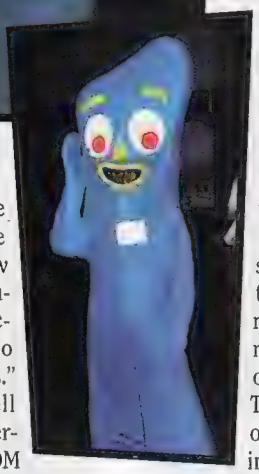
Movie buffs, or people who just needed to get away from the crowd for a while, could watch special film previews. Patrons could see previews of flicks like *The Three Musketeers*, *Nightmare Before Christmas*, *They're Back*, and others. Two special sneaks were those of the animated Batman movie, hosted by producer and writer Paul Dini, and a full screening of *Trancers*, which features a screenplay written by none other than Peter David. *Trancers* is set for a January '94 release.

Regular viewers of the new Superman show *Lois & Clark* couldn't miss DC Comics' special behind-the-scenes look at the show, hosted by Supereditor Mike Carlin and *Man of Steel* artist Jon Bogdanove. Both men, who had recently visited the set and were filmed in a crowd scene for the show, discussed what's been happening with the program and its connections with the comic books.

Carlin noted, "DC has had more connections with this show than any other comic adaptation," and that there will be several characters, and even plotlines, crossing over between the show and DC's Superman titles. "They've been consulting us in pre-production of each show and during the production," Bogdanove said. "They're not just tolerating DC's involvement, but actually seeking us out, encouraging us to help." They both mentioned that word-of-mouth and, of course, increased viewership by comic readers will help the show stay alive.

There was even a seminar for artists hoping to make it into the lucrative comic book business. It was hosted by Michael Davis, whose Bad Boy Studios has given the comic world fine artists like Valiant's Bernard Chang and Defiant's Adam Pollina. Davis made several important points to the audience during the program. "You guys are the future of the industry, but I have to stress, you have to be good," he said.

"You also have to spend your money on your careers," added Davis, displaying the ideal kind of portfolio case: small enough to fit on a desk, with a handle for easy carrying. He also discussed the important basics of interview and post-interview etiquette, so that the grateful attendees could have an edge on their ever-increasing competition.



PRETZEL PHOTO BY FRANK BURD. © PHILA. POST CARD CO.

Although competition was the magic word for retailers throughout the show, most of the hundreds of retailers came away from it happy and enriched. Take Vincent Gulla, owner of Amazing Comics: "I'm a dealer in the Philadelphia area, and if I'd have known how big [this] was, I'd have reserved three booths." John R. Smith, owner of Mint Man Comics in Monsey, N.Y., was pleased by the turnout, although, as he said, "I knew it would be a success."

Philip Levine, owner of the Philip M. Levine and Sons store in Three Bridges, N.J., and the retailer with the largest booth at the show, added that the Greenhill Productions people were now major players in the con-creating field. John Sterling, manager of Triple Play Cards and Comics in Toronto, Canada, said, "Comicfest has been fabulous—I'm beat. The sponsors, the other dealers, and the set-ups have all been great. In Toronto, we don't have any cons this size, so it's nice to see the full spectrum of retailers and exhibitors. The freebies are good, too, and Philadelphia is a fabulous city."

Some retailers made the trip to Philly just to see what was happening in the industry, what was selling well, and to make major purchases. Two such retailers came all the way from England: Louise and David Shack, co-owners of the Comic Shack in the city of Leytonstone, near London, decided to make Philadelphia their vacation spot this year. Mrs. Shack said that she and her husband regularly travel to comic conventions so he can increase the size of his collection. "We've been to San Diego, New York, and Orlando, among other places," she stated. "In Florida, I didn't even see Disneyland or the beach, just comic shops." Both Shacks, who enjoy visiting the U.S. regularly, were pleased with Comicfest.

Most patrons had extremely enjoyable weekends, too, including Danny Zilkowski of Little Falls, N.Y. "This is the first time I've been to something this big," he said. "I've gone to shows before where there were [only] one or two people signing, so this was kind of overwhelming... Seeing John Romita Jr. and the people at the Superman forum were definitely two of the biggest plusses. I also completed many comic and card sets."

WIZARD FAN AWARD WINNERS

Here they are! A complete listing of all the awards. We counted hundreds and hundreds of ballots, and these are the people, stories, and characters that you decided should be winners!

Your zany host, Bob Zany!

FAVORITE PENCILER
Todd McFarlane
FAVORITE INKER
Scott Williams
FAVORITE COVER ARTIST
Tie: McFarlane, Joe Quesada
FAVORITE WRITER
Tie: Peter David, Neil Gaiman
FAVORITE EDITOR
Bob Layton
FAVORITE PAINTER
Joe Jusko
FAVORITE COLORIST
Steve Oliff
FAVORITE LETTERER
Tom Orzechowski
FAVORITE HERO
Spider-Man, Marvel
FAVORITE HEROINE
Rogue, Marvel
FAVORITE VILLAIN
Magneto, Marvel
FAVORITE VILLAINESS
Catwoman, DC
FAVORITE SUPPORTING CAST CHARACTER (MALE)
Robin, DC
FAVORITE SUPPORTING CAST CHARACTER (FEMALE)
Mary Jane Parker, Marvel
FAVORITE SINGLE STORY
Tie: *Sandman* #50 (DC), *Spawn* #10 (Image)
FAVORITE STORY ARC
"Knightfall," DC
FAVORITE COVER
X-O Manowar #0, Valiant
FAVORITE ONGOING TITLE
Spawn, Image
FAVORITE ONE-SHOT SPECIALTY BOOK
Vengeance of Bane #1, DC
FAVORITE MINI-SERIES
Batman: Sword of Azrael, DC
FAVORITE PUBLISHER
Image
FIRST ANNUAL COMIC BOOK HALL OF FAME AWARD
Julius Schwartz, DC

Hall of Fame inductee Julius Schwartz.

Painter of choice Joe Jusko.

A proud Scott Lobdell.

Jimmy Palmiotti, Gareb Shamus, Bart Sears, Joe Quesada, and Todd McFarlane toast the evening.

"This is the first major con I've been to, and I'm pretty impressed," said Chris Kelley, who along with his girlfriend, new comic fan Tanya Dobrowolski, drove 800 miles from Michigan to attend Comicfest. "It's large, but people have been answering questions, and they've been really courteous about signings."

Above: Two more guys in fur suits looking for trouble. Right: Mantra strikes a pose in the Wizard booth. We all needed a cold shower after she left!

This courtesy was exemplified by McFarlane himself, who decided to cancel his lecture in order to talk with the onslaught of fans at his tables and to autograph the dozens of profferred items. This was seen as a commendable act of generosity by many, including attendees at his forum, each of whom received a special premium from McFarlane. "He really, really cared about the fans, and wanted to get out every autograph he could," said Comicfest coordinator Wechsler-Chaput. "I think that he did absolutely the right thing."

The DeBernardo family from Pelham, N.Y., all of whom collect comics, had lots of praise. "It's a very big show, with a lot of comic dealers who have a lot of what I'm looking for," said nine-year-old Danny DeBernardo. "It's a huge show, and I got to meet Todd McFarlane," said his 12-year-old brother David. "We got the Black *Venom* #1 for $350," added their mother, Marlene. "They had to pull me away from the 50¢ boxes. We had a great time."

Vertigo editor Stathis mentioned one aspect of the con that pleased him and his fellow staffers: "It's always a good thing to find out who buys our books and why. Vertigo readers are really different from most comic readers, and it's always a surprise to see them, because they're never what you would expect. There were some who were strange, with white make-up, teased black hair and weird T-shirts, but many were 'normal' people. There's always surprises and shocks, and that's what's good about this type of show."

Michael Eury, a Dark Horse editor, admitted that, although he was slightly skeptical about the show at first, he was pleasantly surprised by the outcome. "I'm a former Philadelphia resident, and I've been to smaller shows around here. I wasn't aware that this area could attract this many people, and it seems like the actual exhibitors and the talent are the stars of the show. It's incredible to see the response... Every single exhibitor and publisher [seems to be] getting people who are asking a lot of good questions."

"This was the first East Coast show for Now," said Now Comics Publisher Tony Caputo, who helped arrange the successful Mr. T appearance at his booth, part of a promotion for Now's new *Mr. T and the T-Force* book. "It was the biggest American comic book show, like they said it would be."

The show was a hit for other organizations, including the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. Beth Robinson, administrative assistant for the CBLDF, said her booth helped many people learn about the organization. "A lot of people went through here; we gave a lot of literature out, and received a lot of donations," she said. She noted that several CBLDF T-shirts and buttons were sold, so the word was spread successfully.

Scott Lobdell noted, "The marketplace itself is getting larger; in all this competition between the companies, I think we're losing track of the fact that we're getting a much larger audience. This means we have a responsibility to put out even better material, and I hope to see everybody rise to that challenge."

"It's been magnificent, and there's been an enormous amount of people, a lot of whom have never been to a comic show before," commented Jim Shooter, president of Defiant. "The level of enthusiasm has been the most memorable aspect of the show. I'm very impressed with the whole thing; everyone seems to be having a good time, and [the producers] have taken care of us just wonderfully. We're very happy we're here, and we're certainly going to come back."

"I'm not surprised that Comicfest surpassed that of San Diego in the amount of people attending, because the East Coast has needed a really big convention like this for quite a while, and I'm glad that this has come along to fill the bill," said Dorian Tenore-Bartilucci, sales assistant and communications liaison for Defiant. "What's nice about it is that it's attracted a lot of people who are not comic fans, so it's widening the comic audience a great deal. There's certainly something for everyone here; even if you're not a big comic fan, there's a lot of things to enjoy."

"I think this was phenomenal for a first-time-ever convention," said Wechsler-Chaput. "I am so excited to be on the ground floor of this." The show manager, Vinnie Bartilucci, was pleased that, of the over 30,000 paid attendees, a survey showed that 50 percent had never been to a convention before. "There were a lot of families here; in many cases, no matter which member wanted to go, the entire family came. The new collectors learned about the industry and its many products, and there were also quite a few companies—new and old—which had never set up a booth at a con before, and were just flabbergasted by the response."

How'd Badrock land all the hot babes at the show?

Peter Greenhill, vice president of the Comicfest staff, added, "I'm very pleased by the endorsement of sponsors and dealers," and that his organization already has a long list of registrants for the next Comicfest, to be held in June 1994 in New York City's Jacob Javits Convention Center. The consensus in the comic book industry is that if this Comicfest was so amazing, then next year's should blow people away. After all, Marc Leonard, from Hoboken, N.J., called the 1993 edition "the Lollapolooza of the comic world." ☆

The fans have spoken!

VERTIGO

FAVORITES IN THE FIELD: 1993 WIZARD FAN AWARDS

Favorite one-shot
BATMAN:
VENGEANCE OF BANE

Favorite mini-series
BATMAN:
SWORD OF AZRAEL

Favorite story arc
KNIGHTFALL

Favorite cover artist
Joe Quesada

Favorite villainess
CATWOMAN

Favorite male supporting cast member
ROBIN

Favorite single story (tie)
SANDMAN #50
"RAMADAN"
by *Neil Gaiman*
and *P. Craig Russell*

Favorite writer (tie)
Neil Gaiman
Peter David

Special congratulations from DC Comics *to* Julius Schwartz, *first recipient of the Wizard Comic Hall of Fame Award!*

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Grand Prize (one winner)

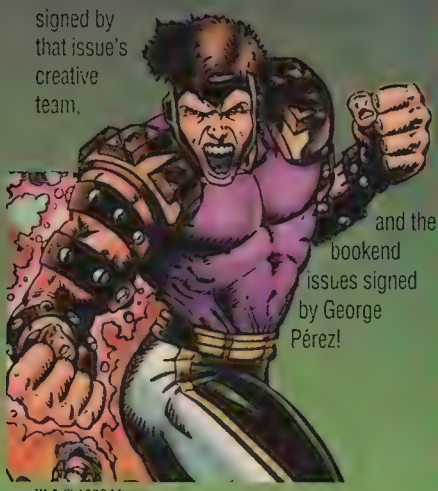
A set of all seven hologram-covered Ultraverse books (*Prime* #1, *Freex* #1, *The Strangers* #1, *Hardcase* #1, *Prototype* #1, *Mantra* #1 and *Exiles* #1), all signed by their respective series artists and a 5' tall Prime stand-up, signed by artist Norm Breyfogle!

Second Prize (five winners)

A set of the Ultraverse #1's (*Prime* #1, *Freex* #1, *The Strangers* #1, *Hardcase* #1, *Prototype* #1, *Mantra* #1, *Exiles* #1, *Sludge* #1 and *The Night Man* #1), all signed by their respective artists.

Third Prize (15 winners)

A set of the entire Break-Thru crossover series, with each issue signed by that issue's creative team, and the bookend issues signed by George Pérez!



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Name

Age Phone #

Address

City State Zip

QUESTIONS

1) Who killed the Ultraman Glare?

2. Mantra's real name is:

3. Tom Hawke is better known as:

4. Amber Hunt appeared on the first page of which Ultraverse premiere edition?

5. What was it that the Strangers were riding when it was hit by lightning?

6. Who did Prime smack around in the opening of the premiere issue?

UNSCRAMBLED ANSWER:

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families and Tom "madman" Mason. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, the information about the store where you purchase comics, and the Ultraverse code on an "Official Entry Form", a 3x5 index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Ultraverse Contest, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent of substitution prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 17, 1994. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly-completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 18, 1994 by Wizard Press. For a list of winners, available after February 1, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Ultraverse Contest, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

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THE HOLLYWOOD BEAT

YOUNGBLOOD CARTOON DEBUTS IN '94!

ALL YOUNGBLOOD CHARACTERS™ & © 1993 ROB LIEFELD.

BY BARRY LAYNE

Beginning in September 1994, Rob Liefeld's Youngblood characters will star in their own animated cartoon series. To produce the cartoon, Liefeld is joining forces with Roustabout Productions, a newly formed animation company made up of six veteran animation artists who have worked on big-name cartoons like *Batman: The Animated Series*, *X-Men*, *Darkwing Duck*, and others.

"I was in negotiations with just about everyone for a Youngblood animated series when [Roustabout] walked into my office," Liefeld says. "They really blew me away! Their presentation was fantastic, and the decision to go with them was made later that afternoon." Liefeld is also quick to point out that he will still retain complete ownership of his characters, which was not an option with the other animation companies.

"This is a much more comfortable fit for me," Liefeld says. "I relate to these guys as artists. Between the six of them, they bring over 60 years of experience to this project." He says that Roustabout, much like what Image did in comics, is "breaking from the corporate structure to master their own destiny. They're very familiar with the Youngblood characters, and very excited about making this the event of the '94-'95 television season."

"We have stuff planned that is absolutely groundbreaking in scope," says Nick Dubois, a spokesperson for Roustabout. "Not only in terms of the animation itself, but in terms of marketing and distribution."

"We are very close to signing a network deal, and we expect to make an announcement soon," Liefeld says. Networks are said to be fighting over the animation series.

While Liefeld and Extreme editor Eric Stephenson are currently writing a story "bible" for the series, the Youngblood roster they are working with features members from both Youngblood and Team Youngblood, including Badrock, Sentinel, Shaft, Diehard, Vogue, Riptide, Chapel, and Troll. Expect cameo appearances by other Liefeld teams and characters such as Brigade, Bloodstrike, Supreme, and Prophet. Work has already begun on the series, and a two-minute promotional short will be available for the public

this November; another will double as a television commercial, beginning sometime before Christmas 1993.

BARNEY CARES—AND SHARES

The owners of TV's most powerful character are going to share their licensing and merchandising revenues with the network that helped turn Barney the purple dinosaur into a lean, green money machine. After intensive pressure from Congress—which often covers PBS' losses—the Texas-based Lyons Group has agreed to share a piece of the ancillary market profits with the nonprofit TV service. Barney merchandise is projected to top $500 million in retail sales this year. Expect other producers of children's shows for PBS—especially producers of character-driven shows—to follow suit.

ANIMATED VIDEOS SELL OUT

Home video remains the province of animated characters. Walt Disney's *Aladdin* is set to become the best-selling video title in U.S. and Canadian history. The current champ is *Beauty and the Beast*, also from Disney, which has sold 22 million units. *Aladdin*'s magic carpet ride is expected to surpass 30 million units.

MARVEL GOES HOLLYWOOD, GETS ANIMATED

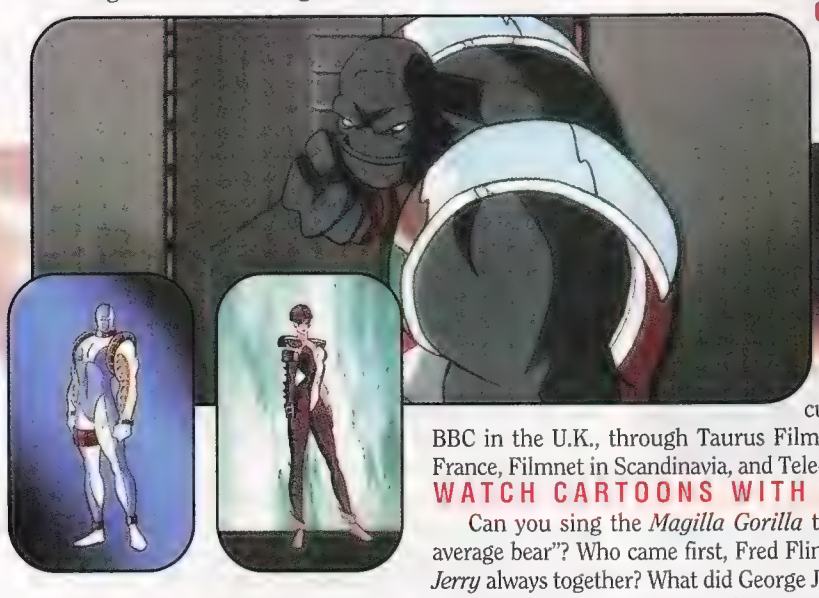
Production begins in Los Angeles in January on 65 new half-hour episodes of *The Spectacular Spider-Man*. Behind a $25 million production commitment from financier Ron Perelman, the animated series will be seen around the world. *The Spectacular Spider-Man*, which will be shown on the Fox Children's Network here in the U.S., is being produced by New World International; both that company and Marvel are owned by Perelman.

Spidey is also set to go into production later this year as the star of a big-budget, live-action feature film. It will be directed by action-adventure master James Cameron and produced by Carolco Pictures.

A number of other sister Marvel Comic titles are also in various stages of development as live-action projects: *X-Men* is at 20th Century Fox, *Incredible Hulk* is at Universal Pictures, and *The Blade* is at New Line Cinema.

CONAN-IMATION

Conan the Adventurer has been sold to a number of international markets. The Sunbow Productions venture has cut deals to air the animated series on the BBC in the U.K., through Taurus Film in Germany, Refeltalia in Italy, TFI in France, Filmnet in Scandinavia, and Tele-Cinco in Spain.



From left to right: Shaft, Die Hard, Vogue and Badrock are only four of the many Youngblood characters coming to the small screen.

WATCH CARTOONS WITH RABBITS AND BABOONS

Can you sing the *Magilla Gorilla* theme song? Who is "smarter than the average bear"? Who came first, Fred Flintstone or Ralph Kramden? Were *Tom & Jerry* always together? What did George Jetson do at Spacely Sprockets, anyway?

If you know the answers to these questions, you're probably one of the growing thousands who have found television's Cartoon Network. The Cartoon Network has taken the TV world by storm since it exploded onto the scene in October 1992 as part of Ted Turner's vast Atlanta-based web of cable programming services, which includes CNN, TNT, TBS, and the forthcoming Turner Classic Movies. With its eclectic collection of classic Warner Brothers, United Artists, and Hanna-Barbera cartoons, the Cartoon Network, or TCN, is that rare channel which families can watch together. It introduces the next generation to platinum standards of TV animation while giving the parents an opportunity to relive their youths.

Maybe that's why recent Nielsen ratings have found the Cartoon Network to be the most-watched new cable network: viewers average about six hours a week in Toon Town. By contrast, Sci-Fi Channel watchers averaged just 2.5 hours per week, and viewers tuned into Comedy Central about 1.7 hours a week. TCN has successfully debuted in the U.S., Latin America, and across most of Europe; it's now available in over 21 million households worldwide. And, with the exception of resistance from the French—who, it appears, are concerned that the channel neither contains any locally produced material nor includes Jerry Lewis—no government or country has objected to the clean, family fun of the Cartoon Network.

"The world has gotten so complicated, so sophisticated, that I think there is something appealing about cartoons, which are vividly drawn, creative, and just plain fun," said top Toon-keeper Betty Cohen, the Cartoon Network's executive vice president.

The challenge of building the 24-hour-a-day channel was not just that of putting the pieces together—Turner and company took care of that over the years, acquiring libraries which incorporated early Warner Bros. and United Artists animation, and later buying the entire Hanna-Barbera studio. The hardest task was finding a way to arrange thousands of cartoons into a cohesive schedule which people would want to watch.

"How can you align them in a schedule in a way that makes sense, so that they're not just Toon Soup?" Programming Vice President Mike Lazzo says, recalling the network's early days. "The key was and is to look at the programs as television programs, and not as cartoons," he says. "There are different types of animation, and there are different program forms."

So Lazzo, Cohen, and the rest of the Atlanta-based Cartoon Network team went about looking at the cartoons from a television programming perspective. Utilizing analytic tools like psychographics, demographics, dayparting, focus groups, and the

Spider-Man ™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

Hang on, true believers! There's 65 episodes of *The Spectacular Spider-Man* coming for the fall 1994 season!

skew and audience flows created by different scenarios, they put the pieces together. The result is a roller coaster ride of animation all-stars and also-rans that begins with a radio station-type wake-up show called *The Morning Crew* and continues late at night with presentations of esoteric and specialized animation in *Toon-Heads*.

In between, viewers get "the complete story of great animation, covering decade after decade," Lazzo boasts. The vice president, given the opportunity to dig deeply into the vaults and recreate half-hour shows as they originally ran—each 30-minute cartoon program traditionally included three six-and-a-half-minute pieces—created a weekend series called *Boomerang*, which offers viewers the chance to see cartoon shows the way they were first presented in the 1960s and '70s. "It's really cool to go in and put the shows back the way they were," says Lazzo with an excited Southern twang.

"For so long, you couldn't find a lot of these shows. Yogi Bear was on one network, Huckleberry Hound was on another, Bugs Bunny was on a third," he says. "The main, number one thing about the Cartoon Network is that people can know they can come to one place and revisit all these great shows."

Ah, but Rome was not built on classics alone. With that in mind, the Cartoon Network is embarking on an ambitious new programming plan. Ted Turner-owned sister company Hanna-Barbera is working on the most important of those production efforts: *Space Ghost: Coast-to-Coast*, TV's first combined cartoon and human talk show, debuts as a weekly offering on January 21.

This unique project features real, live human appearances by some of Hollywood's biggest stars. They'll be interviewed by Toon Town's "Space Ghost," a black-hooded interplanetary crime fighter. The show is being produced in two steps: first, a star is questioned by a producer on a set, then recut versions of existing Space Ghost footage are incorporated into the picture. In-house producers rearrange the toon elements, even rerecording dialogue to fit a script that is written after the interviews.

"This is a step beyond just repackaging. We are pushing the creative envelope. We are changing the perceptions of what we can do. But, just as importantly, we are redefining a well-known character, casting it in a new light," Cohen explained.

As ambitious as *Coast-to-Coast* sounds, it is only one of the Cartoon Network's original programming plans for 1994. They even hired Bobcat Goldthwait to star as the cartoon world's first live-action animation character. And no, that's not an oxymoron.

In *The Moxy Pirate Show*, the Cartoon Network, in conjunction with Colossal Pictures (the company responsible for MTV's *Liquid Television* and owners of two Oscar nominations and several Emmy Awards), has created a trailblazing technology: real-time animation. A far cry from the traditional ink-each-cel animation technique that we have grown to know and love, real-time animation uses state-of-the-art digital equipment. When strapped to Bob Goldthwait, they allow him to control the on-screen movements of his Moxy character. The result is a live cartoon, if you will, with working arms, legs, hands, and feet. In addition to starring in his own weekly show, Moxy will also become something of a Toon Town staple as the host of a number of specials and the focus of a number of recurring interstitials—televisionese for those brief programs which run between full-length shows.

"*Moxy* is proof that we are committed to both sides: the tradition and history as well as the future," Cohen exclaims. "We are using the technologies of today, and at the same time are really reverential of the past." And nowhere is that dual dedication made more clear than in a major programming investment in Hanna-Barbera and a commitment to the return of the short.

Those six-to-seven minute mini-films used to be the cornerstone of the American animation industry, the place where superstars like Chuck Jones, Tex Avery, and Fritz Freleng toiled in the glare of the limelight and were hailed for their creations. Those days could well be on their way back. Beginning next year, the Cartoon Network and Hanna-Barbera will team up on perhaps the most aggressive commitment to shorts since the Cold War. They are promising at least 48 productions between 1995 and 1998. Hopefully, these shorts will help cartoon makers put some luster on their stars—or receive recognition for the first time in their careers. Each title is set to get full star treatment: their premieres will be treated like those of full-length features, complete with lights and celebrity-packed openings, and all of it will be captured on the Cartoon Network.

"We will be making these shorts with a different mentality than our competitors at Warner Brothers or Disney or elsewhere," Hanna-Barbera President Fred Seibert says. "We won't have the pressure of having to make another 39 episodes," he notes, referring to the fact that most animated properties are developed for the highly lucrative television syndication market. "We also won't have to worry about the theater owners, who won't touch these anymore anyway because it takes away too much screen time. There is no financial upside for them to run these [shorts]. There is no financial upside for the producer to make them," Seibert continues, opining that most television producers develop relatively tame material.

"If we used that economic model, they'd never get done again. For us, the Cartoon Network is essentially a theater

SPORTS LOOK

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than can recognize the value of a one-off. It is, in fact, the only place where shorts can be brought back to life. In the same way that U-2 may debut a new video on MTV worldwide, we're going to premiere single cartoons every couple of weeks on the Cartoon Network.

"We are really making a commitment to the form, and therefore...the people and the industry... We are locating talented animators who can become stars," says Seibert. "I think it's a tragedy that our industry has only created two stars in the last couple of decades [*Cool World*'s Ralph Bakshi and *Ren & Stimpy*'s John Kricfalusi]. We need to find the animators with talent, and give them the resources and latitude to make great cartoons."

Photo © Albert L. Ortega. All Rights Reserved.

Hanna (l) and Barbera (r) are expected to produce original shorts fo rthe Cartoon Network.

The first production deal for shorts has gone to Pat Venture, who will likely produce as many as 10 shorts over the life of the two-year project. Venture, an industry veteran, is getting his first opportunity to run the show, and his initial outing is expected to be a reincarnation of "George and Jr.," the classic Tex Avery franchise. A number of older, established cartoon superstars, among them Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera, are also expected to produce several shorts.

The network has been able to make these aggressive moves because of its financial position, which is brighter than anyone at Turner ever expected. Cohen even acknowledged that the channel, despite its relatively small distribution, will be profitable in 1994.

"It wasn't supposed to happen until 1995, but our ratings came faster than planned, so advertiser support was higher than projected. Also, because ratings and advertising came, cable operators have to look at us again to find room for us on their systems. It's a cycle, and it's all working to our advantage," Cohen explains.

"We're a force to be reckoned with. Nothing attracts viewers like our library, and we've been smart enough to know how not to sell it. The kiss of death is to sell nostalgia," says Cohen. "We have to give viewers a contemporary reason for revisiting the shows, but we don't say, 'Come back to your childhood.' If you notice, we won't even use the word 'classic.' It's more of an emotional and entertainment connection. [If] people think of anything animated they love and...immediately think of the Cartoon Network, then we know we've been successful."

"People are generally more envious than mocking," Lazzo says of working at the network. "The only exception is my mother. She didn't get it when I was a kid, and she doesn't get it now... I'll never forget when she would come into the living room and say, 'Michael, turn off the television and go finish mowing the lawn.' All I could say was, 'When this cartoon is over,' and I'd go back to watching *Jonny Quest*. She would always shake her head and say, 'Watching cartoons won't help you later in life.'"

See—moms aren't always right.

CHUCK IS BACK!

Speaking of animation, one of the kings of the golden age of animation, Chuck Jones, is set to make a comeback. After more than 30 years, the three-time Academy Award-winning animation director is returning to the site of his greatest accomplishments, Warner Bros. Production will be overseen by his daughter, Linda Jones. The first production is expected to feature classic Warner Bros. characters, and future projects may introduce new ones.

Jones, who worked with greats like Fritz Freleng, Tex Avery, Bob Clampett, Virgil Ross, and Robert McKimson, created characters like Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny, and the Road Runner. "The characters were multiplications of our own foibles," Jones once said of them. "Otherwise, they wouldn't communicate at all, and they wouldn't be funny. Bugs and Pepe, for example, represent my aspirations—what I would like to be. But Daffy and the Coyote are...what I fear I am." ☆

THE NUMBERS ARE IN!

TOP 10 HIGHEST GROSSING FILMS 9/20-10/29

FILM	COMPANY	MADE TO DATE
1. Demolition Man	Warner Bros.	$26.9
2. The Beverly Hillbillies	20th Century Fox	$9.5
3. Cool Runnings	Touchstone	$26.6
4. Malice	Columbia	$27.2
5. Judgment Night	Universal	$4.1
6. The Good Son	20th Century Fox	$35.2
7. The Joy Luck Club	Touchstone	$14.9
8. The Age of Innocence	Columbia	$22.3
9. The Fugitive	Warner Bros.	$172.5
10. A Bronx Tale	Savoy Pictures	$10.7

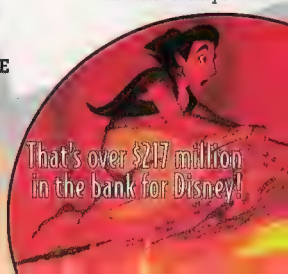
10 HIGHEST GROSSING FILMS OF THE YEAR!

FILM	GROSS TO DATE	WEEKS IN RELEASE
1. Jurassic Park	$325,734,675	16 wks. 3 days
2. Aladdin	217,042,825	46 wks. 5 days
3. Home Alone 2	172,667,450	21 wks. 3 days
4. The Fugitive	166,325,128	8 wks.3 days
5. The Firm	154,555,760	13 wks. 5 days
6. A Few Good Men	141,340,178	32 wks. 3 days
7. The Bodygaurd	121,936,132	25 wks. 3 days
8. Sleepless in Seattle	119,309,156	13 wks. 3 days
9. Indecent Proposal	102,931,598	14 wks. 5 days
10. In the Line of Fire	102,170,490	12 wks. 3 days

Aladdin © Walt Disney Company. All Rights Reserved.

FOUR HIGHEST NETWORKS 9/20-10/29

NETWORK/SHOW	RATINGS TO DATE
CBS/60 Minutes	13.8
ABC/Home Improvement	12.8
NBC/Seinfeld	11.1
FOX/The Simpsons	7.1



BEFORE THE BLOOD OF HEROES-- THERE WAS BLOOD ON HIS HANDS

BLOODSHOT #0

WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY **KEVIN VANHOOK**

AND FEATURING THE INKS OF THE LEGENDARY **DICK GIORDANO**

FULL CHROMIUM WRAPAROUND COVER BY **JOE QUESADA** AND **DICK GIORDANO**

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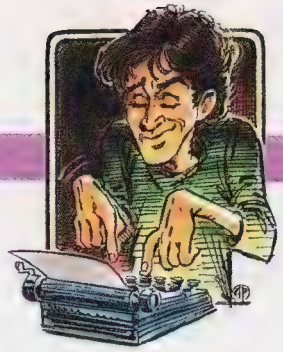


Behind the Eightball

Few comic creators are as original and unpredictable as Daniel Clowes. After attending Pratt Institute, where he studied to be an illustrator, he switched gears and came up with *Lloyd Llewellyn*, a comic based on trashy '50s pop culture and detective novels and drawn in a simple minimalist style. Clowes soon grew tired of Llewellyn, who became an empty character around which to write stories. Clowes needed a change of direction.

He made a radical change in 1989, when he started *Eightball,* a comic which can best be described as a one-man anthology along the lines of *Mad* Magazine. In the first few issues, Clowes experimented with several art and writing styles, like the simple yet realistic stream of consciousness drawing in "Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron," the thickly textured art of the bitter "I Hate You Deeply" and "The Future," and the loose caricature of Clowes' satire of the comic industry in "Young Dan Pussey." The stories in *Eightball* continue to draw from a wide range of influences and styles, as is evident in the Harvey Comics-inspired characters of "Playful Obsession," the extremely minimalist cartooning of "Why I Hate Christians," and the amazingly accurate observations of "The Party," a story seen through the eyes of Clowes.

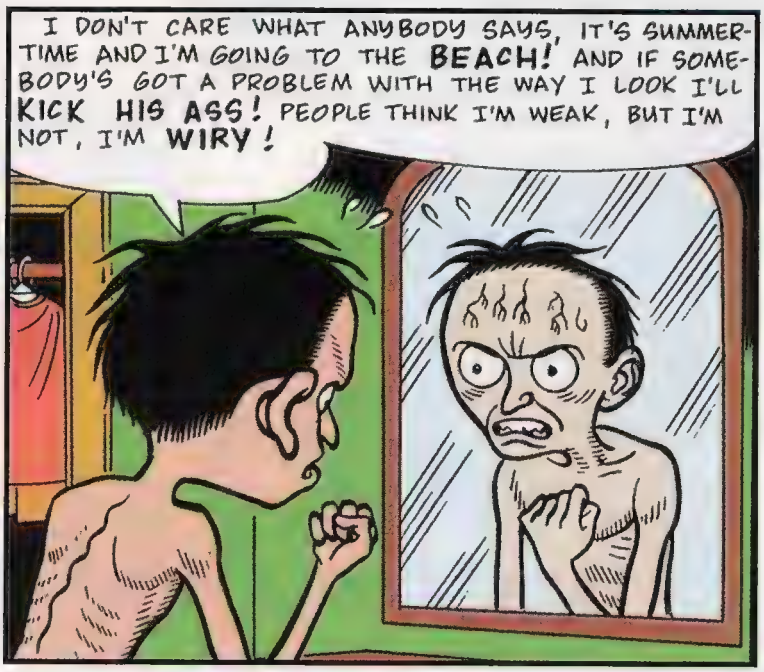
"*Eightball*: a comic which can best be described as a one-man anthology along the lines of *Mad* Magazine."

The main attraction of the first ten issues of *Eightball* is "Like A Velvet Glove Cast in Iron," Clowes' intuitive, dream-inspired, experimental epic. "Velvet Glove" features some of the most unforgettable and nightmarish images and characters that have ever appeared in comics. Its images of a man with sea crustaceans in his eye sockets, a dog named Laura without any orifices who must be fed water through a syringe, and Tina, the deformed and mutated dolphin-girl—all of whom appear in "Velvet Glove"—make it almost impossible not to be struck by deep-down feelings of uneasiness or discomfort.

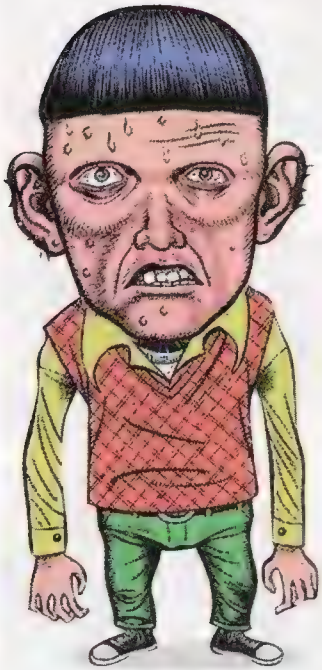
"Like A Velvet Glove Cast in Iron" is a pseudo-mystery that takes Clay Loudermilk through a series of seemingly mundane situations which are skewed by surreal, nightmarish peculiarities and details. Loudermilk sees his wife, who unexpectedly left him, in an avant-garde snuff film and becomes obsessed with finding her. As the plot progresses and he looks for clues to her whereabouts, seemingly insignificant events and characters take on more important meanings. Loudermilk is essentially passive throughout the course of the story; everything that happens happens around him or to him, rather than as a result of his actions. Most of his dialogue consists of tentative questions and choppy sentence fragments which subtly suggest the character's overwhelming confusion.

"Velvet Glove" is a many-layered story that succeeds because of its twisting and intertwining situations and characters. On a simple level, it is a series of subconscious dream images that string together to form a sustained narrative. But it also functions as a social commentary, thanks to its unflattering depictions of police officers and a group of hippies who overthrow the government; as a critique of American popular culture, via an alleged conspiracy disguised as a simple advertising icon; and as a new take on the age-old battle of the sexes, with Loudermilk being beaten by a group of women.

Clowes' other renowned *Eightball* tale is "Young Dan Pussey," a series of strips which



systematically dismantle the comic book industry. Nothing is sacred to Clowes: superhero comics are assaulted in the original "Young Dan Pussey" story with as much intensity as "alternative" comics are lampooned in "The Return of Young Dan Pussey." In parodying the comic book world, Clowes also brings up some disturbing and painfully true aspects of the industry, like the mistreatment of creators by companies and the inherent stupidity of many types of comics.



While Clowes' artwork constantly changes, there are some aspects which remain constant. He has a bold, graphic line which is versatile enough to hold up in both black and white and color strips. His panels are very simple, yet he has a strong sense of design that holds the elements of each panel together, and lets all the panels of a page come together as a unified whole. There is evidence of a strong Harvey Kurtzman influence in the layout of Clowes' pages and in some of the outrageous characters he devises. Clowes is always ready to experiment with different techniques, ranging from simple black and white art to bold full-color stories to intricately cross-hatched work to compositions fleshed out with multiple layers of zip-a-tone dot patterns.

Aside from being a versatile artist, Clowes is also a perceptive and oftentimes hilarious writer. No matter what kind of story he does, be it a sustained narrative like "Velvet Glove" or a sharp parody like "Young Dan Pussey," there is always a sarcastic and caustic bite under the surface of Clowes' work that keeps him at the forefront of innovative comic creators.

Next month: I'll write about Peter Bagge's *Neat Stuff* and *Hate*. If you have any requests, or if you just feel like getting something off your chest, don't hesitate to write to me at Palmer's Picks, c/o Wizard Press, 100 Red Schoolhouse Road, Bldg. B-1, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977. I'll do my best to answer any questions or comments you have. ☆

Tom wants to grow up and live in the suburbs with a wife, a dog, and 2.5 kids. Hopefully it'll be somewhere other than New Jersey, where he's lived all his life.

Tom's Recommended Reading

Eightball: The twelfth issue of *Eightball* should be available about now, and all issues are being kept in print by Fantagraphics Books. Ask your local store to contact them or order directly from Fantagraphics at 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115. Sample issues are $3, and a four-issue subscription is $9.50. (All prices here and below are postage paid.) The first four issues of *Eightball* are all black and white, but the remaining issues contain some two-color and full-color strips. Although many of the stories from *Eightball* have been reprinted elsewhere, the actual issues are the only places to see some strips in their original color versions.

Like A Velvet Glove Cast in Iron: This 144-page comic-sized book collects all ten chapters of Clowes' breakthrough story. The softcover goes for $16 and the signed hardcover version will set you back $45.

Lout Rampage: This book reprints the best of Clowes' shorter comic stories, including "I Hate You Deeply," "The Stroll," "Life in These United States" (with Peter Bagge), and "Playful Obsession." Most of the material comes from *Eightball*, but there are also some Clowes strips from *Blab!*, *Weirdo*, and other magazines. The book contains 96 magazine-sized pages in black and white, and it runs for $13.

#$@&!: A second printing of this book of Lloyd Llewellyn stories is now available. Thirteen tales are reprinted, including "Crawl, Worm!," "The Eatniks," and "Dementia Praecox." The stories are reprinted from the original *Lloyd Llewellyn* comic series and the *Lloyd Llewellyn Color Special*, both of which are now out of print. *#$@&!* runs 96 pages and is in black and white. The second printing has a new cover by Clowes and goes for $13.

Other Stuff: Fantagraphics also offers several *Eightball*-related items. There is a set of ten color *Eightball* postcards for $7, a coffee mug decorated with Clowes characters ($9), a cloisonné pin or a rubber stamp with Clowes art ($9 each), and a Young Dan Pussey and a Lloyd Llewellyn T-shirt ($17.95 each). Two high-quality silk-screen prints of Clowes' artwork are also available. Clowes produced an all-new 11-color "movie poster" for "Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron," which goes for $80 and is limited to 400 copies. Fantagraphics has also printed an eight-color silk-screen of Clowes artwork for the Misfit Lit contemporary comic art exhibition; it costs $60.

ALL EIGHTBALL ARTWORK ™ © FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, INC.

TAKE A TRIP BACK IN TIME!

...NOT *THAT* FAR!

ACT NOW! THERE'S MORE WHERE THESE CAME FROM, BUT ONLY WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!!!

WIZARD BACK ISSUES

Wizard #16

A load of excitement is unleashed in this wild issue, featuring an Image Jam cover by Kieth, Keown, Lee, and Liefeld! *Diff*'s Dale Keown talks about his favorite big boy! "Knightfall" cover artist Kelly Jones previews his powerful work, and we look at the Sandman! Plus the usual hard-hittin' departments and features! Whoa, Nellie!

Wizard #19

Look Out! Here comes an angry Wolverine! Oh, that's just the cover (by Earl Sears) ... *Wizard* cuts deep into Wolvie's life, with a Larry Hama/Mark Texeira interview! Plus: Roy Thomas discusses the Avengers West Coast, and legend talent Mike Mignola tells us about his taking on Dracula! And MORE! In-CRED-ible!

Wizard #23

Deathmate comes *Alive*, as the Image and Valiant creators give us the scoop on their mega-crossover! Also: 3 companies crowd this issue's spotlight—Dark Horse (and its Comics' Greatest World project), Vertigo, and Kitchen Sink! And much more, all under a *Triple*-gatefold Deathmate cover by Sears! Whoo-eee!

Wizard #28

"D'oh! There's too much to *Read* here, Marge!" "These *Wizard* people seem very thorough, Homer... with articles on our new comic, and interviews with nice men like John Byrne, Joe Quesada, Sam Kieth, William Messner-Loebs, and Barry Windsor-Smith! And Steve Vance and Bill Morrison portrayed us very well on the cover, don't you think?" "BURP!"

Here's my time machine. Put the Wizards in the mail!

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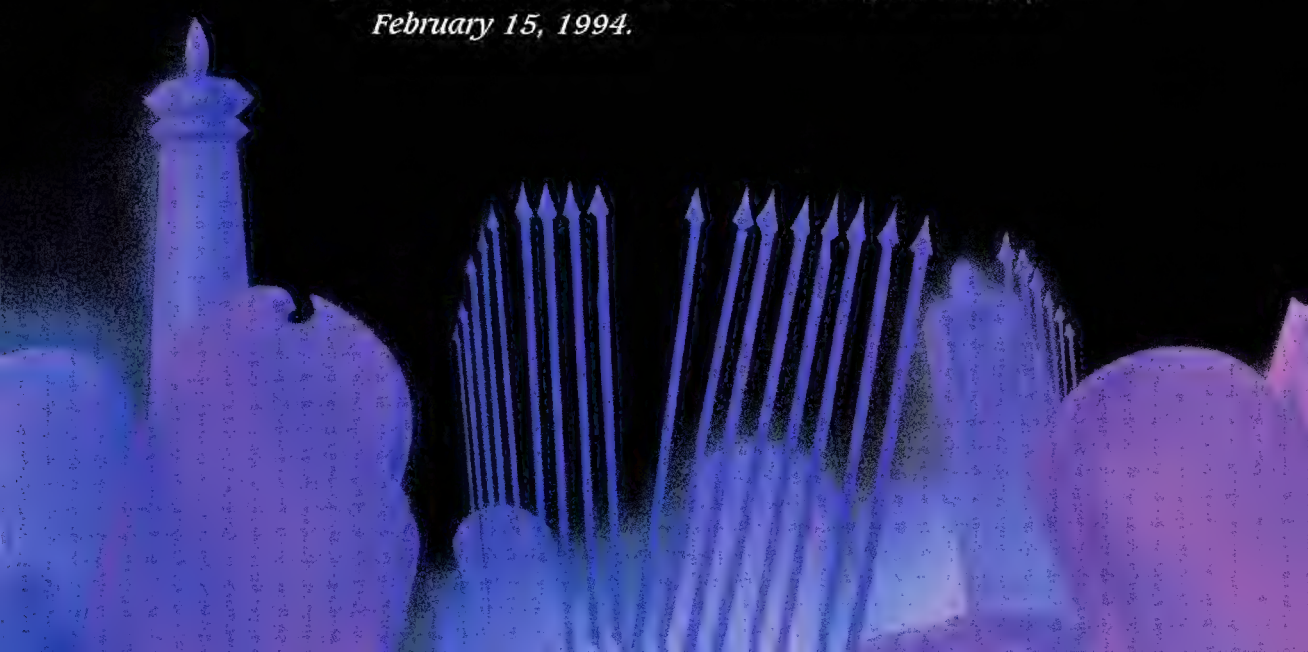
The Video Board-game
Nightmare
What's your worst Nightmare...

...You scum sucking

The Gatekeeper, host of the video board game NIGHTMARE, wants to know about your dreams. But not just any dreams. He wants to hear about the kind that keep you up at night. The kind that wake you up in a cold sweat. In other words, he wants to hear about your ***WORST NIGHTMARE.*** And if your story is so vivid and frightening that our judges are too scared to go out at night, then you could win the GRAND PRIZE of an amazing Hitachi home entertainment system, complete with giant projection TV and hi-fi VCR. It's the kind of set up that will let you play the ultimate game of NIGHTMARE.

Here's how you do it.

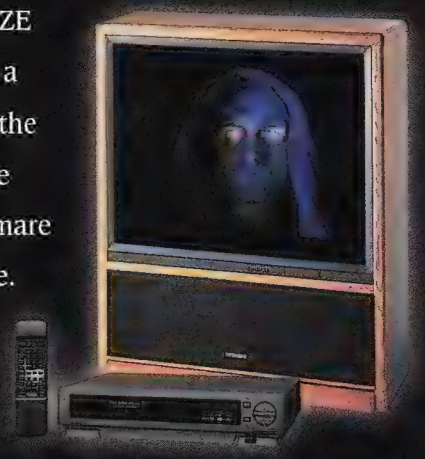
Tell us your worst nightmare by creating a storyboard that depicts the sequence of events of your dream. The storyboard will be a series of drawings with captions that explain your nightmare both in visual and written form. However, if your artistic talents are limited to stick figures and fingerpainting, then you can just write a story about your worst nightmare. Whichever way you do it, **just make sure that we receive your entry by** ***February 15, 1994.***



maggots.

Here's what you could win.

The most colorful, frightening nightmare will be selected as the GRAND PRIZE winner by our judges. The GRAND PRIZE winner will win the ultimate home theater adventure, a Hitachi giant projection TV and VCR so they can play the video board game NIGHTMARE on the big screen. The GRAND PRIZE winner will also have his or her nightmare published in an upcoming issue of WIZARD Magazine. In addition, other contest winners will receive NIGHTMARE games, baseball caps, T-shirts, posters, and more.



RULES FOR "NIGHTMARE" PROMOTION
No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, and their immediate families. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code and telephone # on a plain piece of paper and include with your entry. Each entry must be packaged individually and sent to **"NIGHTMARE CONTEST" P.O. BOX 761, MONSEY, NY 10952-0761.** All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize winner per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by **FEBRUARY 15, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. The selection of the winners by judges of this contest are final.

For the name of the winner, available after March 31, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Nightmare Winners," P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

CBIQ

Polish your cranium and get ready, boys and girls, it's time once again for the *Wizard* trivia contest. What follows are 30 of the toughest questions this side of the SAT, and only a select few have what it takes to score a perfect 30 points.

Think you can score a 30? Go ahead, give it a shot. This month, we're grading you alongside the crappiest presents you can get for Christmas. In other words, the lamer the gift, the higher your score.

0-6	**Something your Grandma bought from QVC (probably for a couple of hundred bucks, too).**
7-13	**The complete run of *Cage* (actually, this might not be so bad if it's chilly and you own a fireplace).**
14-22	**Any type of POG (the worst product of the '90s, narrowly beating out the "Scab-Ki-Bob").**
23-29	**A Twinkie full of pus.**
30	**A year's subscription to *WetWorks* (you'd never get anything).**

1. Which of these characters does not have green hair (on their head that is, these are Code-approved books)?
A) She-Hulk
B) Polaris
C) Florowoman
D) Fire

2. Tasmanian Devil used to be a part of:
A) The Guardians of the Galaxy
B) The Guardians of the Universe
C) The Global Guardians
D) The Guardians

3. Destro's real name is
A) Wilhelm M. Stanford
B) Cornelius S. Destro
C) Fred T. Sanford
D) James M. Destro

4. Who was Spawn's daughter Cyan named after?
A) The French word for "moon"
B) Al Simmons' great-grandmother
C) Todd McFarlane's daughter
D) A lake in Northern Canada

5. Brainiac's human name was:
A) Milton Fine
B) Querl Dox III
C) Scott Free
D) Matt Hawkins

6. Who is the Alien Legion's commander?
A) Admiral Grimrod
B) Colonel Tonk
C) Major Sarigar
D) Captain Starbuck (and his trusty mascot Dagget!)

7. U.S.Agent's former alias was:
A) Super Patriot
B) Captain America
C) Buck Nekkid
D) A & B

8. Which of the following Image characters is not an alien?
A) Photon
B) Psi-Fire
C) Vanguard
D) Combat

9. Name the metal the Golden Age Hawkman used to help him fly.
A) Ninth metal
B) Titanium
C) Vibranium
D) Weed

10. Which character killed the original Guardian from Alpha Flight?
A) Madison Jeffries
B) Wild Child
C) Hulk
D) Jerry Jaxon

11. Iron Man's armor:
A) used to keep Tony Stark alive
B) was solar-powered
C) once affected his nervous system
D) all of the above

12. Who were the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles named after?
A) Janitors
B) Athletes
C) Artists
D) It doesn't matter, they're freaks! Freaks!!

13. Wonder Man was once:
A) a strong guy on a kiddie TV show
B) a talk show host
C) an optometrist
D) none of the above

14. Grendel-Prime is:
A) part man, part machine
B) all man (really, he showed us)
C) all machine
D) part woman, part machine

15. Moms like Kix:
A) for what Kix has got
B) for what Kix has not
C) *sigh*...forget this one and move on

16. Which hero is responsible for freeing Captain America from the block of ice in which he'd been frozen since World War II?
A) Hulk
B) Namor
C) Iron Man
D) Thor

17. Sandman's son, Orpheus, was killed by:
A) Death
B) the Harpies
C) Sandman
D) all of the above

18. Before she joined WildC.A.T.s, Voodoo worked as:
A) an exotic dancer
B) a waitress
C) a singing telegram
D) a receptionist at Wizard

19. Who was the Charlton Comics counterpart of Dr. Manhattan from Watchmen?
A) Mr. A
B) Firestorm
C) Nuklo
D) Captain Atom

20. The crazed super-villain who used Shadowhawk as his role model is:
A) The Liquifier
B) The Shadow Thief
C) Hawk's Shadow
D) Black Condor

21. Before he became Valor, his name was:
A) Mon-El
B) Dev-Em
C) Kal-El
D) Anti-Em

22. Why did Badrock pick a fight with the Savage Dragon?
A) The Dragon gave him a parking ticket.
B) The Dragon called him a "...punk in tights."
C) He wanted to see if the Dragon was tough enough to join Youngblood.
D) He was mad that the Dragon's books were kinda on time, and all the Youngblood books were so late.

23. Madman's real name is:
A) Albert Galileo
B) Frank Einstein
C) Joe Plato
D) M. Dalton Allred

24. Irwin Schwab goes by the name:
A) Bouncing Boy
B) Speedball
C) The Heckler
D) Ambush Bug

25. The ankh, at one time or another, has been a symbol for:
A) Moon Knight
B) The Sphinx
C) Death
D) A & C

26. Who created Ultron?
A) Dr. Doom
B) Henry Pym
C) The Tinkerer
D) The Mad Thinker

27. Magnus' North Am is in:
A) the Akron sector
B) the London sector
C) the Ottawa sector
D) the Erie sector

28. Which character was never a rich playboy?
A) Green Arrow
B) Moon Knight
C) Booster Gold
D) Hawkeye

29. Dark Phoenix destroyed a race that looked like:
A) asparagus
B) cauliflower
C) beef jerky (hey, the Macho Man ain't gonna like that...)
D) lettuce

30. Which of the following X-Men-ish characters doesn't need to wear glasses?
A) Cable
B) Scott Summers
C) Nightcrawler
D) The Beast

☆

A	N	S	W	E	R	S
1) C	2) C	3) D	4) C	5) A	6) C	7) D	8) B	9) A
10) D	11) D	12) C	13) A	14) A	15) B	16) B	17) C	18) A
19) D	20) C	21) A	22) C	23) B	24) D	25) D	26) B	27) C
28) D	29) A	30) C						

TOYING around • around • around • around

WITH BRIAN CUNNINGHAM

BEST TOY FIGURES OF 1993

For our humongous year-ending issue, we columnists figured (no pun intended) that we would need something equally humongous to grab your attention. On a more personal level, I thought I'd review the Top 10 Best Action Figures of 1993. The year had its ups and downs, but there's nothing more satisfying than looking at a good toy (and sometimes even its associated gimmicks) and admiring its craftsmanship. The second part of this massive column belongs to you, the readers, which is fitting, since Toying Around wouldn't be nearly as much fun without your contributions.

And so, without further ado, I present to you...the finest of '93.

10) G.I. Joe Star Brigade's T.A.R.G.A.T. (Hasbro). I've always maintained that COBRA guys are among the coolest-looking villains of all toydom, and T.A.R.G.A.T. holds true to form. Of all the 1993 small Joes, this one is worth taking a second glance at. A simple but neat feature is the moveable visor, which looks cool on an otherwise featureless helmet. The figure also carries a rather large arsenal, which at times seems kinda redundant, seeing that they lose all the time.

9) X-Men's Bishop (Toy Biz). Standing broad-shouldered amongst the other X-Men figures, Bishop looks ready to blow away any evil mutant (or goofy-looking human, for that matter) that walks in its way. Its gimmick is pretty nice, too: the figure quick-draws its gun into firing position with a press of the button on its back. And speaking of guns, the two guns it carries look complex and futuristic like they should. Unfortunately, because of Bishop's longish hair, the head is not movable. The swivel-action waist makes up for that by allowing maximum poseability despite the noggin.

8) Batman: The Animated Series' Scarecrow (Kenner). Never in my life did I think I'd see a Scarecrow figure in any way, shape, or form...but then again, I never thought I'd see a G. W. Bridge figure, either. While the Scarecrow itself looks fantastic, it's the add-ons that augment this guy. The removable crow is a nice touch, as is the rapid-action scythe. But the clincher is the "red-eye" effect that occurs when you place a light over its head. It really does look spooky!

7) X-Men's Strong Guy (Toy Biz). Although the character's not one of my favorite X-people, this action figure is really sharp because it looks identical to the Strong Guy in the comics! Not that there's much to screw up, but I've seen simpler characters ruined in the translation. This figure is also very different-looking from the rest of the line, which makes it stand out. Plus, Strong Guy can also disco and do the twist with his pivot action. What more can you ask from an action figure?

6) Aliens' Alien Queen (Kenner). Ever since the first film was released in 1979, I've been willing to sell body parts (some of them, anyway) to get my mitts on an Alien figure. The original figure which came out in '79 was much larger than practically every other brand of action figure out at the time. This newer and more compact version is perfect—jutting teeth and everything! Even the baby Alien—a chestburster, included with the Queen—is kinda neat. (Just think—

™ & © Universal City Studios/Amblin Entertainment Inc.

Hey! It looks like Kenner's *T. rex* (above) is going to eat Man-Bat (top)! Oh, wait... he's just saying, "*Me gusto bailar! Caramba!*"

™ & © Marvel.

Hmm... is it just me, or is there a small spaceship landing on Toy Biz's Apocalypse II?

™ & © Hasbro.

Hasbro's Hall of Fame Deedro has *such* a big ego that he needed two dogtags five times the average size to put his name on. Sheesh!

Top Ten Most Wanted Figures

10) Bane
9) Darkhawk
8) Azrael
7) Prophet
6) Rogue
5) X-O Manowar
4) Psylocke
3) Spawn
2) Carnage
1) Ghost Rider

Carnage is actually challenging Ghost Rider for the top spot—it's closer than you might think! On the other hand, Darkhawk has plummeted in the voting, and Bloodshot has disappeared off the list entirely—but X-O is rising steadily, jumping from No. 10 to No. 5. Also, welcome rookies Bane and Azrael to the mix.

™ & © Marvel.

Ghost Rider is still #1. [illegible] long? Will he be dethroned, or will he finally get a figure in '94?

did you ever in your wildest dreams imagine that you would have a baby Alien?) A classic figure to terrorize the rest of your collection.

5) Classic Star Trek Collector's Set (Playmates). Just because it's publicly known that I wasn't enthralled with the classic Star Trek TV series doesn't mean that I can't admire the action figures based on its characters. Aside from coming in a truly spiffy-looking package, the faces on these figures are "classic" in and of themselves. The Bridge setting, part of the packaging, is an especially stylish touch. And hey—there's Sulu and Chekov figures, to boot. (I'm an unabashed fan of Mr. Sulu, for those of you who don't know.) What more need be said?

4) G.I. Joe Hall of Fame's Destro (Hasbro). One of the assets of the G.I. Joe line of figures has been that its villains have always looked more interesting than its heroes, which serves to highlight the courage of the good guys. Destro is no exception, as this larger-than-life-sized version of him is very well-crafted. Besides its ability to take off its mask, the figure has removable clothing, real rubber boots, personalized dogtags, a personalized belt buckle, a big gun, and a knife that has the coolest lil' Destro head at the end of its handle! (No fooling!) Fully poseable, just like the original G.I. Joe, this figure/doll is most impressive.

3) Jurassic Park's Tyrannosaurus Rex (Kenner). Speaking of larger-than-life, this *T. Rex* speaks—or roars, rather—for itself. Its sheer physical quality alone is reason enough to enjoy it. The hide is so soft that it feels like human skin, its maneuverable head/neck is unparalleled, and the electronic sounds it makes put fear in the hearts of every other figure. In terms of size, *T. Rex* is monstrous next to other figures: a Bob the Goon figure would fit right in its mouth (*T. Rex* is good for eating lame-o figures).

2) X-Men's Apocalypse (Toy Biz). As far as evil mutant action figures go, have you ever seen anything meaner-looking than this figure? Bart Sears definitely knew the right mood to catch Apocalypse in when he designed this figure. The replaceable mechanical arms are kinda dumb, but the looming presence this figure has, compared to happy-go-lucky villains like Magneto and Omega Red, is impressive. As with Bishop, the swivel-waist action allows this guy to look imposing even when he's just standing there. Apocalypse is the epitome of Toy Biz's excellent craftsmanship.

1) Batman: The Animated Series' Man-Bat (Kenner). As much as I thought I'd never see a Scarecrow figure, I'd thought I'd see 100 Scarecrows before I ever saw a Man-Bat figure. (And no, I'm not talking about that Nick Manabat guy who draws Cybernary, either. He doesn't have his own action figure.) Man-Bat has always been one of my favorite Batcharacters, and I'm very pleased that Kenner had the guts to make this figure. Despite its difficulties with standing upright when its wings are spread, the figure, when placed next to the other B:TAS figures, is extremely intimidating. My favorite of 1993.

So there you have it—the best of '93. Do you agree? Disagree? I'd like to hear your thoughts on the matter, so write in to condemn or praise my selections at: Toying Around, c/o Wizard Press, 100 Red Schoolhouse Rd., Bldg. B-1, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977.

Ultraverse Contest

Got some more free time? Good, 'cause our pals over at Malibu are sponsoring another Ultraverse-themed "create your own figure" contest. What you have to do is make your own Prototype or Sludge action figure out of an already-existing action figure, and send us a clearly-focused color photo of your entry or entries. The creator of the best version of each character will win a framed page of original art from one of the Ultraverse titles, signed by the artist! Everyone who enters will receive a certificate of thanks for taking part in this contest. Please send all entries to: Toying Around Ultraverse 2, Wizard Press, 100 Red Schoolhouse Rd., Bldg. B-1, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977. All entries must be received by January 14, 1993, and the winners will be displayed in *Wizard* #31. Good luck!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and their immediate families. All entries become the property of Wizard Press. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the contest winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. Are you reading this fine print again? Get to work on them figures! Offer void where prohibited, and *Wizard* does not take responsibility for lost, late, misdirected, mutilated, or devoured entries.

Manbat ™ & © 1993 DC Comics. T-Rex and Destro photos by Hal Charms.

Prototype and Sludge ™ & © 1993 Malibu.

FIGURES ON PARADE

THE BEST HOMEMADE FIGURES OF 1993

The next six pages are dedicated to something we've wanted to do since our first Special Edition, more than a year ago. The overall response towards our showcasing of homemade figures has been increasingly phenomenal. So phenomonal, in fact, that through our normal "Figure of the Month Contest," we've stockpiled some awe-inspiring photos and we've waited for the right time to display 'em.

Each of the contestants whose work appears on the following pages will receive a chromium Santa trading card from this issue signed by both Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti, *Prime* #1 signed by Norm Breyfogle, *Robin* #1 signed by Tom Grummett, *Spawn* #16 signed by Greg Capullo, and *X-Men* #25 signed by Andy Kubert. The third place winner will receive, in addition to all the cool stuff above, *Bloodshot* #6 signed by Don Perlin and Kevin VanHook, the gold *WildStar* #1 signed by Al Gordon and Jerry Ordway, and *Spider-Man Unlimited* #1 signed by Ron Lim. The second place winner will receive every prize mentioned above plus *Lobo: Portrait of a Victim* signed by Val Semeiks and *Adventures of Superman* #501 (direct version) signed by Tom Grummett.

The grand prize winner will not only receive every prize mentioned on this page, but will also win *Madman Adventures* #3 signed by Michael Allred; *Prototype* #1 signed by Tom Mason, Len Strazewski, David Ammerman, and James Pascoe; *Namor* #26 signed by Jae Lee; and *Extreme* #0 (San Diego Comic Con edition) signed by Rob Liefeld.

So, to all the fans who did and did not make it here, thanks for your tenacity, hard work, and continued support.

HAWKBART
BOB TORREGROSSA
STATEN ISLAND, NY

Hey, man! With a little work on a Bart Simpson head and a muscular body, you can get goofy superheroes!

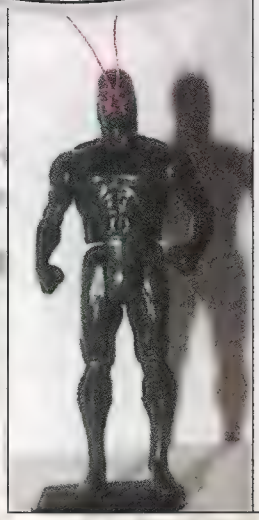
HAWKMAN © & ™ 1993 DC COMICS
THE SIMPSONS © & ™ TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX FILM CORPORATION

JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA
SCOTT METZGER
DAYTONA BEACH, FL

OK, everybody say "cheese"! These figures were made from various Mego, Barbie, and Barbie-esque dolls/figures.

ALL CHARACTERS © & ™ DC COMICS

AMBUSH BUG
JOHN MOONEY
MEMPHIS, TN



Made from a Super Powers Flash, this Ambush Bug figure would make Keith Giffen proud.

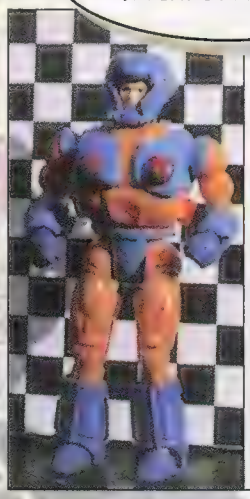
™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

LOBO
JOSEPH SIMONE & ANITA MOREZZI
FLUSHING, NY

Look at the detail given to every part of this impressive Lobo figure. It was made from an action figure from the *Commando* film.

™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

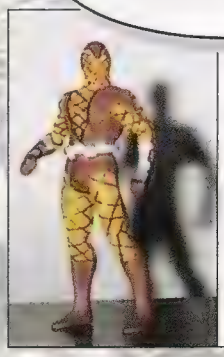
X-O MANOWAR
GREGG KEEFER
JACKSONVILLE, FL



A tough figure to attempt, this X-O is successfully crafted from a Toy Biz Iron Man figure.

™ & © 1993 VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS

THE SHOCKER
RICHARD THORNQUIST
WELLESLY, MA



This guy was made from a Super Powers Green Lantern figure.

™ & © 1993 MARVEL COMICS

THE GREAT GUY GARDNER
JEREMIAH HOOVER
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Guy's body looks as if it came from a Toy Biz Captian America, but the head escapes us. (Sorry.)

™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

SURRENDER NOW!!

CRIME SYNDICATE
ROBERT E. GROVER
LANSDALE, PA

Power Ring was a Toy Biz Riddler, Owl-Man was a Bruce Wayne figure, Superwoman was a Toy Biz Wonder Woman, and Johnny Quick was a Toy Biz Flash.

ALL CRIME SYNDICATE CHARACTERS ™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

CAPTAIN MARVEL
MIKE IRWIN
McDONALD, OH

This was made from a Super Powers Green Lantern.

™ & © 1993 MARVEL COMICS

ETERNAL WARRIOR
& MAGNUS
MARC PATTEN
S. WINDSOR, CT

We have no idea what these guys used to be, but they sure look neat to us.

ETERNAL WARRIOR & MAGNUS ™ & © 1993 VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS

L.E.G.I.O.N. '94
BOBBY FALIN
BOWLING GREEN, KY

Stealth was a Storm figure, Garryn Bek was a Captain Planet, Vril Dox was Bruce Wayne, Phase was also a Storm, and Lobo was a Toy Biz Iron Man.

ALL CHARACTERS ™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

SOVIET SUPER SOLDIERS
TREVOR ELLIS
BROCKTON, MA

From l. to r.: Crimson Dynamo was a Toy Biz Iron Man, Darkstar was a Storm, Vanguard was a Silver Surfer, Ursa Major's origin is unknown, Red Guardian was a Captain America, and Fantasma was a Storm.

™ & © 1993 MARVEL COMICS

DEATH'S HEAD II
FRANKLIN BARNWELL III
BUFFALO, NY

This Death's Head II figure was made from a Power of He-Man figure.

™ & © 1993 MARVEL COMICS

NEW RAY & OLD RAY
BOBBY FALIN
BOWLING GREEN, KY

Two generations of Rays! The new version used to be a Bruce Wayne from Kenner's Batman Returns collection while the old Ray was a Toy Biz Flash.

™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

SHADOWHAWK
MICHAEL PACE
BOSSIER, LA

This guy used to be a Toy Biz Wolverine II figure.

™ & © 1993 JIM VALENTINO

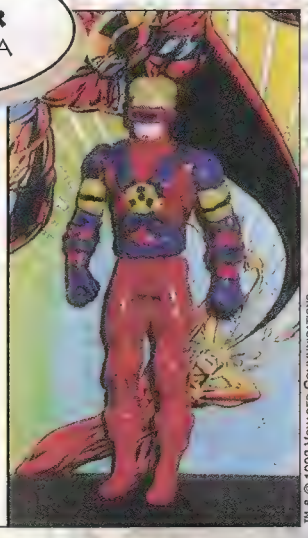
NEW TITANS
RONALD PURVIANCE
TAMPA, FL

From l. to r.: Raven was a Toy Biz Wonder Woman, Speedy was a Toy Biz Riddler, Starfire was also a Toy Biz Wonder Woman, Nightwing was a Toy Biz Riddler, Troia was yet another Toy Biz Wonder Woman, Jericho was a Super Powers Aquaman, and Wildebeest was a Super Powers Superman.

ALL CHARACTERS ™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

X & SOLAR
CHRIS RYDER
PETALUMA, CA

Left: Can you believe Comics' Greatest World's most popular antihero used to be a Toy Biz Archangel figure?
Right: Solar the Destroyer was made from a Captain America body and a Cyclops head.



™ & © 1993 DARK HORSE COMICS

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PUCK
FRANCIS P. ARENCIPIA
RIDGEWOOD, NY

Puck, according to Francis, was made from "some Dino-figure."

™ & © 1993 MARVEL COMICS

SUNFIRE
MARCUS CARPENTIERE
BRONX, NY

The top half was a Captian America and the bottom was a Wolverine II, both fromToy Biz.

™ & © 1993 MARVEL COMICS

STEELE & REBIS
PETE GARCIA & AL REANO
BURBANK, CA

Cliff Steele from the Doom Patrol used to be a Kenner Batman, and his teammate Rebis was a Toy Biz Flash.

™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

NEXUS
NICK RIZZO
CHICAGO, IL

This cool Nexus used to be a Toy Biz Silver Surfer.

™ & © 1993 MIKE BARON AND STEVE RUDE

YOUNGBLOOD
BOB GAMACHE
ASHBURNHAM, MA

From l. to r.: Badrock was a Toy Biz Thing, Shaft has a Toy Biz Punisher body and a Forearm head, Combat was a Toy Biz Stryfe, Diehard was a Toy Biz Deadpool, and Chapel has a Cable body and gun, a Punisher head, and a Kenner Terminator gun.

ALL CHARACTERS™ & © 1993 ROB LIEFELD

TODD McFARLANE
SCOTT TATINA
LEESBURG, VA

Hey! What's he doing here? Hmm, do you think it's appropriate that he was made from a Rambo figure?

™ & © 1993 TODD'S PARENTS

NEW BATMAN
MARC ROSENZWEIG
DEER PARK, NY

Az-Bats' head was taken from a Toy Biz Batman, the torso is from a Secret Agent Wolvie, the gloves are from an Apocalypse II, and the legs are from Kane I.

™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

HAWKMAN
MIKE IRWIN
McDONALD, OH

This *Hawkworld* Hawkman used to be a Super Powers Hawkman.

™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

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Each manuscript should be typed, double-spaced, run in length between 1300 and 1500 words and be accompanied by a three- qto four-line biography about the author. Submissions for review as guest writers for any monthly department or column are also encouraged.

If artwork can be provided by the author to enhance the article, indicate this, but do not send any with the original submission. *Wizard* is looking for concise, tightly-written manuscripts that cover a subject area as thoroughly as possible in 1300 to 1500 words. All manuscripts are subject to editorial review and revision to conform to the editorial criteria of *Wizard*. All material in *Wizard The Guide To Comics* is protected by copyright and may not be published elsewhere without written permission from *Wizard*.

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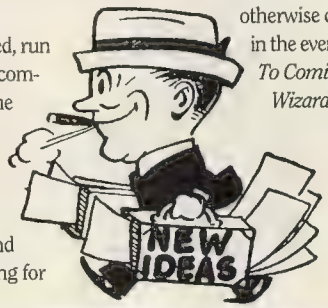


Manuscripts and requests for additional information should be addressed to:

Submissions Review
Wizard The Guide To Comics
100 B-1 Red Schoolhouse Road
Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977

3RD PRIZE

GREEN LANTERN CORPS
RONALD PURVIANCE
TAMPA FLA

Kreon was a Super Powers Lex Luthor; Guy's body was a Toy Biz Riddler, his head was a Man of Steel's, and the feet are from a Super Powers Luthor; John Stewart was a Super Powers Superman; Brik was a Toy Biz GL; Tomar-Tu was a Toy Biz Riddler.

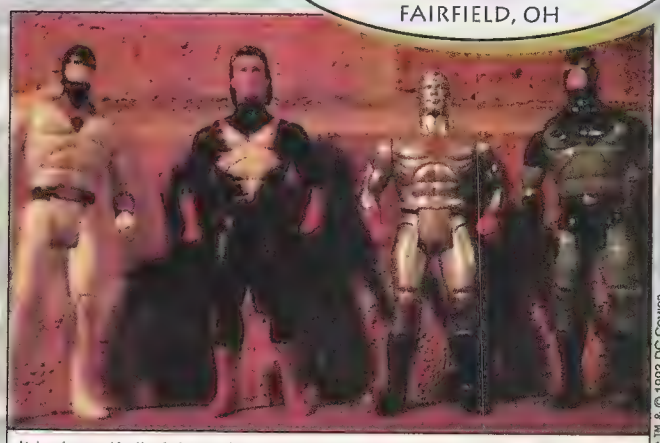
ALL CHARACTERS™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

YELLOW JACKET
TREVOR ELLIS
BROCKTON, MA

Trevor always seems to get the most out of his Toy Biz Silver Surfer figures, as is evident from this sharp-lookin' guy.

™ & © 1993 MARVEL COMICS

SPACE GHOST, STARMAN, CAPTIAN ATOM & BLUE BEETLE
B. JUMP
FAIRFIELD, OH



It looks as if all of these figures were derived from a Toy Biz Silver Surfer figure, but Starman has a Kenner Robin Hood head, and Captain Atom has a Superman head.

ALL CHARACTERS™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

BLACK LIGHTNING
ROBERT E. GROVER
LANSDALE, PA

Black Lightning used to be a Kenner Robin Hood figure. He has an Azeem head, also from the Kenner Robin Hood line.

™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

ADAM WARLOCK & KRAVEN THE HUNTER
NIGEL HAWCROFT
CHESIRE, GREAT BRITAIN

Both Adam Warlock and Kraven used to be Toy Biz Superman figures. Pretty neat, eh?

™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

THE GRAND PRIZE WINNER

GALACTUS

KEVIN POLIDANO & ADAM SIKORA

OSHAWA, CANADA

IT TOOK TWO GUYS TO PRODUCE THIS MASTERPIECE, BUT IT SHOWS! THEY'RE NOT SURE WHAT THEY MADE IT FROM, BUT THEY THINK IT WAS FROM A C.O.P.S. KOO-KOO FIGURE. CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD JOB!

Galactus ™ & © 1993 Marvel Comics

2ND PRIZE

THE PORCUPINE

TREVOR ELLIS

BROCKTON, MA

Did anyone ever think they'd see this figure? He was made from, yes, Trevor's patented technique of successfully converting Silver Surfer figures. Good job, Trevor!

The Porcupine ™ & © 1993 Marvel Comics

Star Trek™-Wars Blow-out!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and that George Lucas fella. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code and the name of and information about the store where you purchase comics on a 3x5 index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Star Trek-Wars Code, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent of substitution prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 17, 1994. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly-completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 18, 1994 by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after February 1, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Star Trek-Wars Winners, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

No questions, no tricks, no strings. *Wizard* is giving away nine extremly cool flicks, among some of the best science fiction movies ever made. What are they?

The Star Trek boxed set

Star Trek: The Motion Picture, The Wrath of Khan, The Search for Spock, The Voyage Home, The Final Frontier and *The Undiscovered Country*, all in the special letterbox format, and complete with an official Star Trek communicator pin!

And...

The Star Wars boxed set trilogy

Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back and *Return of the Jedi*, all in the special letterbox format! Also included in this spectacular hologram-covered boxed set is *From Star Wars to Jedi*, the behind-the-scenes documentary video chroncling the making of the most popular science fiction trilogy ever made, and the special abridged edition of George Lucas Creative, featuring Lucas' thoughts on what was to become *Star Wars*!

Contest Rules

Rules? Almost none for this kick-butt contest. All you have to do to be eligible to win is fill out the official entry form supplied below, or a 3x5 index card, or a standard postcard, and send to:

Star Trek-Wars contest
P.O. Box 5001
Monsey NY 10952-8001

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Name _____

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Store name (where you buy your comics) _____

Store address _____

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CONTEST NO. 7

STAR WARS, EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, RETURN OF THE JEDI © & ™ 1993 LUCASFILM LTD. STAR TREK © & ™ 1993 PARAMOUNT PICTURES.

KA POW SPLAT! THWIP! BLAM!!!
FOOM! THOOM! SNIKT SPLASH

WE SPEAK THE LANGUAGE!

WIZARD™
THE GUIDE TO COMICS

BOOM

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HIDE YOUR PETS

YOU'VE GOT COMPANY

WIZARD™ #30

Beavis & Butt-Head will be paying a visit to comic fans everywhere this January.

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This Month's Hot Game Picks

Sonicmania continues to have a grip on Sega video game system owners, a grip which, if anything, will strengthen with the release of *Sonic Spinball* (Genesis), *Sonic Chaos* (Game Gear), and *Sonic CD* (Sega CD). These are all totally new adventures starring familiar characters (and a few new ones) from the best-selling Sonic game series. Since there's a *Sonic the Hedgehog* comic book (from Archie Comics) and two animated television series currently airing, it's no surprise that Sonic has become the most recognizable cartoon character in America, surpassing Mickey Mouse and Mario.

Sonic Spinball places Sonic in an ultrafast-paced and colorful pinball adventure in which Sonic is the ball. Your goal is to help bounce Sonic around the game screen and penetrate Dr. Robotnik's new fortress. *Sonic Chaos* for the Game Gear is a more traditional adventure which challenges the player with dozens of new obstacles and Badniks, animals which have been turned into evil robots by Sonic's rival, Dr. Robotnik. *Sonic CD* offers Sega CD owners the best, most graphic, and most exciting Sonic adventure yet. This game features over 60 all-new levels, dozens of challenges per level, plus a totally awesome new soundtrack. Whether you're a Sonic the Hedgehog fan or just someone who's looking for a cool gaming experience on the Sega CD system, you should check out *Sonic CD*!

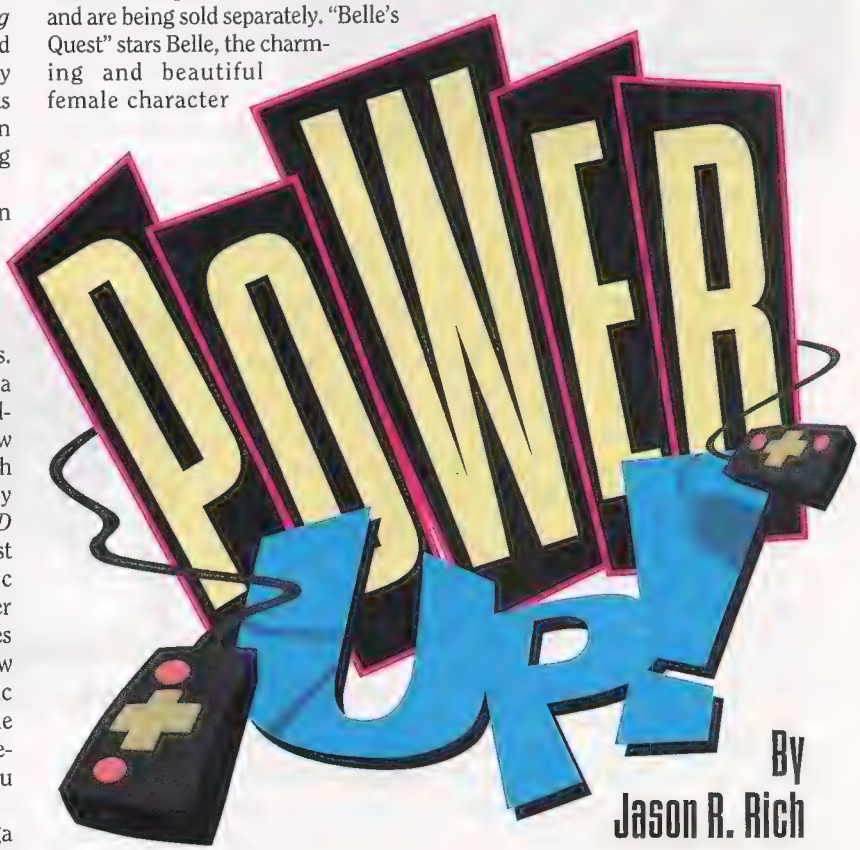
Jurassic Park, also for the Sega CD system, offers a state-of-the-art gaming experience that is totally different from the cartridge-based *Jurassic Park* game for the Genesis. Incorporated into the CD edition of *Jurassic Park* is a first-person perspective the action (as in a role-playing game), plus live-action video, both of which make the play more realistic. You can also expect awesome sound effects, which were recorded using the Q-Sound process.

NES and Game Boy owners can now experience *Tetris II*, the addictive new puzzle game. This second-generation puzzle challenge requires that gamers not only create lines of blocks out of the strange shapes that fall, but, in the NES edition, that they create lines with matching colors as well! The falling blocks come in nine different shapes and three different colors. *Tetris II* is a one- or two-player (simultaneous action) game.

TecMagik has released *Pink Panther Goes to Hollywood* for the Super NES and Genesis, a new and original adventure starring the Pink Panther. This game offers excellent graphics, great sound effects, and plenty of lighthearted fun. Another nonviolent adventure for the Genesis is *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* from Sunsoft. Two versions of this game have been released and are being sold separately. "Belle's Quest" stars Belle, the charming and beautiful female character from the movie. In "Roar of the Beast," gamers control the Beast in a totally different adventure.

Of course, martial arts games continue to be extremely popular. *Mortal Kombat* (Super NES, Game Boy, Genesis, and Game Gear), *Street Fighter II: Turbo* (Super NES) and *Street Fighter II: Special Champion Edition* (Genesis), *Clay Fighter* (Super NES and Genesis), and *Eternal Champions* (Genesis) continue to top the best seller chart, but other fighting games, like *TMNT: Tournament Fighters*, *Battletoads/Double Dragon* (both are for all of the Nintendo and Sega systems) and *Alien vs. Predator* (Super NES) have also proven to be extremely popular among gamers.

TMNT: Tournament Fighters (Konami) puts the martial arts abilities of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles to the test in a tournament situation similar to that in *Street Fighter II*. Meanwhile, *Battletoads/Double Dragon* (Tradewest) places the original video game characters, the Battletoads, in a head-to-head battle against the fighters from the *Double Dragon* games. *Alien vs. Predator* (Activision) adds a sci-fi twist to a traditional fighting game by taking two powerful creatures from the movies and having them fight in an intergalactic battle to the death. All of these fighting games offer fast and furious game play that is challenging and fun, especially when two players compete head-to-head in the simultaneous action modes.



By Jason R. Rich

At the arcades, the hottest coin-op games are *NBA Jams*, *Mortal Kombat*, *Samurai Showdown*, *Virtua Racing*, *Outrunners*, and *Lethal Enforcers*. Watch for the sequel to *Mortal Kombat*, which should be in arcades soon. A *Mortal Kombat* motion picture, to be produced by Larry Kasanoff (*Terminator 2*), and a television series are also in the works.

Check out the game reviews. Turn the page!

Game Reviews

Super Empire Strikes Back
Super NES
LucasArts Entertainment/1 Player

Look out, Luke! Yoda's septic tank is all backed up!

Super Star Wars continues to be one of the most popular Super NES games to date, but if you've already mastered this first adventure, get ready for the second installment of the *Star Wars* video game trilogy. *Super Empire Strikes Back* follows the motion picture, in which Luke Skywalker learns the ways of the Force from Yoda, and uses this knowledge in a battle against Darth Vader.

Super Empire Strikes Back is a 12-meg cart, which makes it 50 percent bigger than *Super Stars Wars*. Not only does this game offer more levels and challenges, but the overall graphics, sound effects, and scrolling have been vastly improved. Packed with 20 different levels, *Super Empire Strikes Back* offers a password feature which you'll definitely need as you control Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, and Chewbacca in this epic video game adventure.

As Luke Skywalker, you'll have to use your fast reflexes and light saber to survive battles against Hoth ice creatures. You'll later undergo intense Jedi training with Yoda on Dagobah, then take off on a mission to rescue Princess Leia, Han Solo, R2-D2, and C-3PO. You also get to control Han Solo and Chewie as they help defend the new Rebel base on Hoth against invading Imperial stormtroopers. Later, you can pilot the Millennium Falcon in deep space and fight bounty hunters in the Cloud City on Bespin.

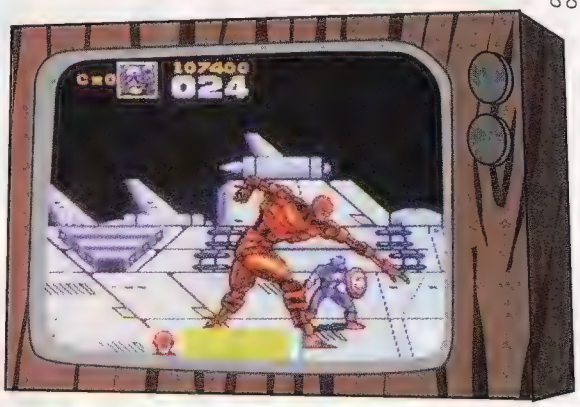
The levels which feature traditional horizontal scrolling graphics are enhanced by brightly colored multidimensional-looking backgrounds. In the flying sequences, you'll experience never-before-seen Mode 7 graphic effects that offer a fast-scrolling, three-dimensional, first-person perspective on the action. These flying sequences offer fully detailed graphics, not polygon graphics found in games like *Starfox*.

Combine these breathtaking graphic effects with actual sound effects from the movie, music from John Williams' score, and extra-large and detailed characters which you can control on the game screen, and you've got an exciting, challenging, and superior game play experience, the likes of which have not been seen before on the Super NES. Whether you're an expert gamer or a beginner, *Super Empire Strikes Back* is well worth experiencing first-hand.

Captain America and the Avengers
SuperNES/Game Boy/Game Gear
The Software Toolworks/1 or 2 Players

The popular characters from the Marvel comic book series now star in the Super NES adaption of the interactive video game adventure from the arcades. *Captain America and the Avengers* puts the popular superheroes up against the Red Skull, who is using a powerful mind control device to command the most sinister villains in the universe. Captain America and the Avengers (Iron Man, Hawkeye, and Vision) are the last hope for the world. These heroes must combine their super powers to put a stop to the Red Skull's evil scheme.

Captain America and the Avengers © 1993 Mindscape, Inc. Software Toolworks. Characters ™ & © Marvel Comics.



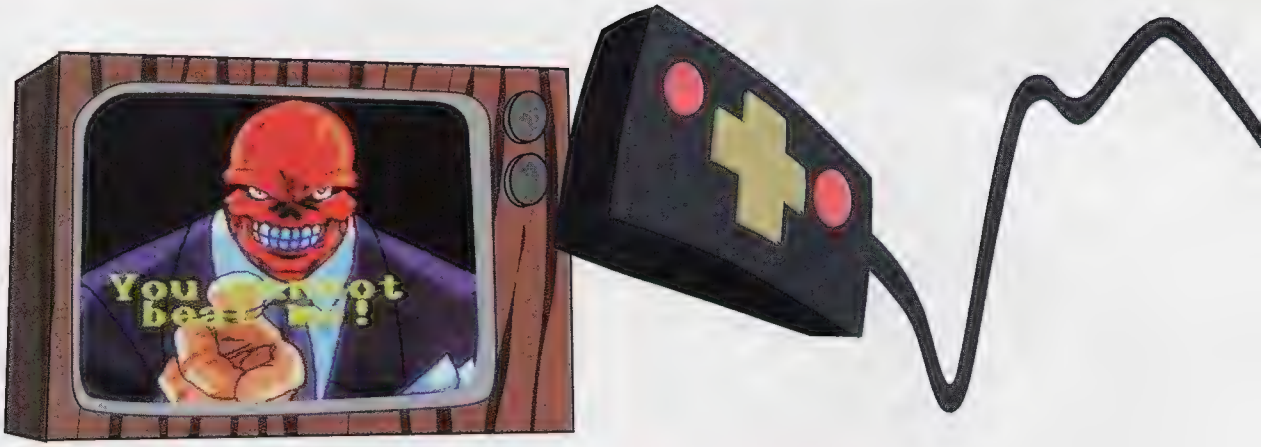
Raise your hand if you're sure!

The five levels of this game contain appearances by over 20 Marvel superheroes and characters, with digitized voices and sound effects taken directly from the coin-op game. You can even experience *Captain America and the Avengers* as a one- or two-player (simultaneous action) game on the Super NES. The entire game has a comic book-like feel, with dialogue windows that appear on the screen in between fighting sequences.

At the start of this adventure, or when an active character's energy runs out, gamers can choose which Avenger they wish to control. Each character has unique powers and capabilities, as

Super Empire Strikes Back © & ™ 1993 LucasArts.

May the Force be with you!



The Red Skull talks tough!

in the comic books. Secret levels, special power-ups, and 1-up (extra life) bonuses are scattered throughout the five main levels. As a one-player game, one Avenger must battle the Red Skull's henchmen in either the easy, medium, or hard game play mode. In two-player (simultaneous action) mode, each player controls an Avenger, and the two superheroes work together throughout the game.

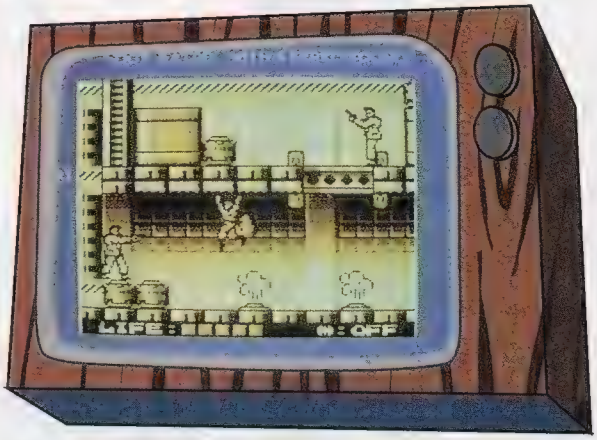
The movement of each Avenger is somewhat limited, and is based upon their individual skills. All of the characters can pick up items or power-ups from the ground, jump upwards, or use their special weapon. Jump attacks are also possible, although the characters cannot crouch down to avoid an attack. As for each character's special weapon, Captain America can throw his powerful shield at enemies or use it as a battering ram; Iron Man can shoot energy beams from his palms and fly; Hawkeye can use his bow to shoot explosive arrows, and can also execute a slide attack; and Vision can shoot solar beams from his forehead gem and also charge and attack his enemies. These special powers will come in handy when battling Red Skull and the 13 other enemy characters featured in this 8-meg game.

Captain America and the Avengers (Super NES version) offers slightly better than average graphics and sound, but only average player control over the characters.

Batman: The Animated Series
Game Boy
Konami/1 Player

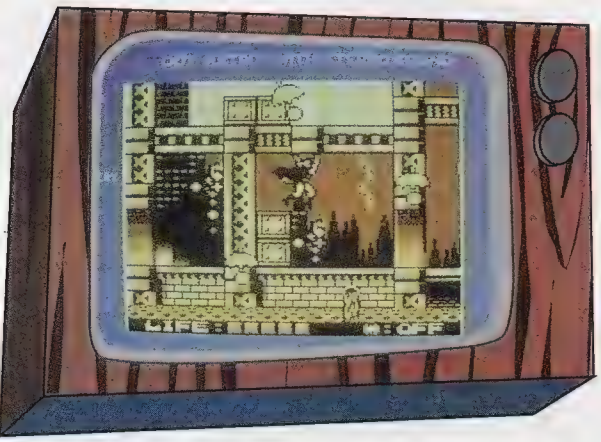
Batman: The Animated Series has become a top-rated animated television series, and Warner Brothers is about to release a full-length animated Batman movie. Meanwhile, Konami has taken the Dark Knight and his partner Robin and created original interactive adventures on the Game Boy. In the *Batman: The Animated Series* video game, you control Batman as he battles Gotham City's most dangerous villains.

Batman is armed with a powerful grappling hook, which supplements his innate strength. Robin has the ability to hang from the ceiling in order to escape from tough situations. Additional weapons can be obtained by grabbing the power-ups which are scattered throughout each of the cart's five main levels. Each level is considered an episode. In episode one, "The Joke's on You," the Joker has planted a gift box containing an army of robotic clowns in the center of Gotham City. Episode two, "The Chill of a Lifetime," puts Batman up against Mr. Freeze. He later meets up with Poison Ivy, the Riddler, the Penguin, Catwoman, the Scarecrow, and even the Joker himself.



Does Batman keep a Game Boy™ on his utility belt?

The Game Boy's small screen notwithstanding, you're in for big excitement as you help Batman and Robin battle their enemies. The graphics are extremely detailed and the action is non-stop. To get the most out of this game, you'll probably want to use an optional Game Boy screen magnifier and light. ☆



The Caped Crusader: Hangin' tough!

BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES © & ™ 1993 KONAMI, INC. CHARACTERS ™ & © DC COMICS.

Jason R. Rich is the author of several video game-related books, including An Official Player's Guide to Sonic the Hedgehog, Conquering Super NES Games, *and* Compute's Sega CD Sourcebook, *all published by Compute Books and available at bookstores everywhere. He is also a regular contributor to numerous gaming magazines.*

FROM THE BEST OF 1993 TO A

PEAK EXPERIENCE IN 1994

BANE AND BATMAN ™ & © 1993 DC COMICS

The second half of DC's two-pronged sales bonanza for '93 consisted of the Bruce Wayne Batman suffering a broken back and being replaced by a new, more violent Batman.

WIZARD

All-New In Ninety-Four! Catch It!

THE WIZARD OF CARDS

BY STEPHEN SHAMUS

FLEER TO RELEASE X-MEN, SPIDER-MAN CARD SETS

This past year was the biggest yet in non-sports cards, and the future looks bright. The biggest news for 1994 is the acquisition of the Marvel license by Fleer. Our buddies at Fleer will be releasing the first set of Marvel cards, a Fleer Ultra X-Men set, in January. This 150-card set will be printed under Fleer's super-premium imprint, Ultra, and will feature artwork from some of the industry's top names, including Bill Sienkiewicz (most famous for his work on *Moon Knight* and *Stray Toasters*) and Glenn Fabry (painter of the *Vengeance of Bane* cover and numerous *Hellblazer* covers). The fronts and backs of the cards will be foil-stamped.

The first of two sets of chase cards has a "Fatal Attractions" theme, based on the recent storyline which started in *X-Factor* #92 and climaxed in *Excalibur* #71. The six cards feature a new artist's take on some of the pivotal scenes in the story, and contain some of your favorite X-characters, including Wolverine, Magneto, and Professor X. The second chase set consists of nine painted cards by the Brothers Hildebrandt, Tim and Greg. These cards present an exciting new technology which Fleer calls Power Blast. It's a new foil-enhancing process that the company is keeping tightly under wraps until the actual release of the set. These sets should also provide the framework for future Marvel releases, which may also contain insert sets following particular themes. Ultra X-Men cards come nine to a pack and carry a suggested retail of $1.49. Look for them right after the first of the year.

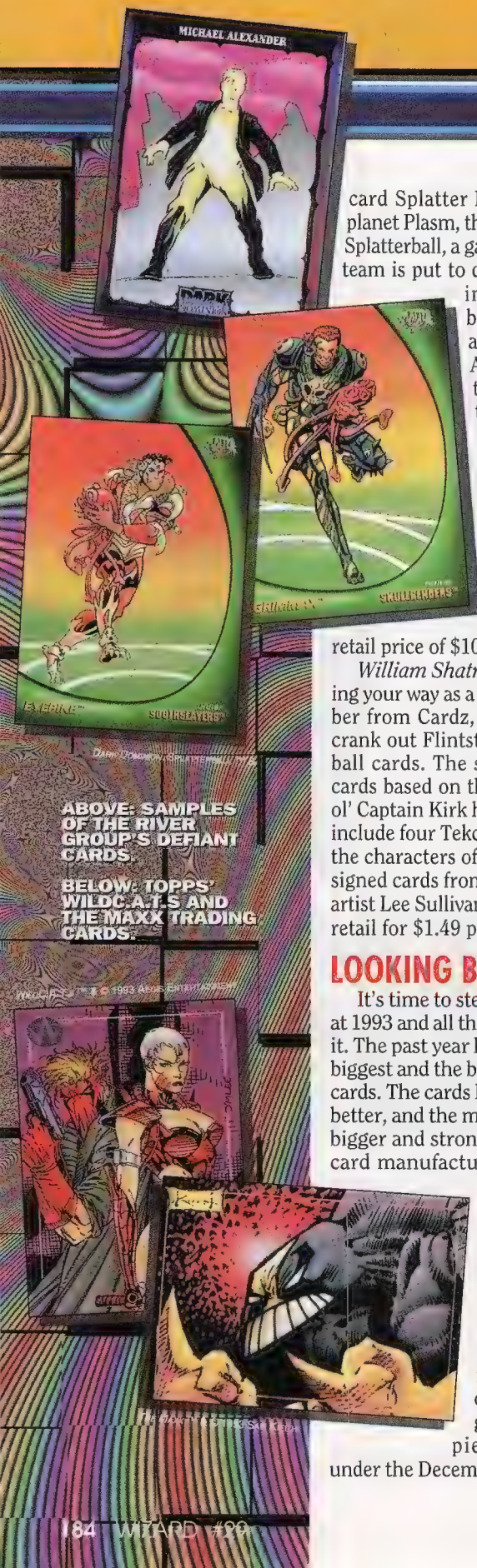
In April, Fleer will be releasing its second line of Marvel cards under the banner "Marvel Cards." This 150-card set spotlights America's favorite webslinger, Spider-Man, drawn exclusively by *Amazing Spider-Man* artist Mark Bagley. The cards will be of the same high quality as the Ultra Marvel cards, and have two similar chase sets. The main difference between the Ultra and Marvel Cards will be the way in which the cards are marketed and designed. The Marvel Cards will be targeted toward the comic audience, while the Ultra sets are geared to appeal more to card collectors.

Look for *Simpsons* trading cards in January from SkyBox. The whole family and all the supporting characters, including Bartman, Itchy and Scratchy, and Radioactive Man, can be found in this set. Randomly inserted into packs are 200 signed cards from *Simpsons* creator Matt Groening. There are also six plastic-stock animation cards and four glow-in-the-dark cards. Nine-card packs will retail for $1.29.

The River Group is releasing its next #0 card set, this time to help launch the new *Dark Dominion* title. This 150-card set is based on Jim Shooter's latest Defiant book. There are eight level one chase cards that feature scenes from the real world. Special binders contain the ninth chase card from the first level, as well as a lens that, when placed over the level one chase cards, makes them appear as they would to a resident of the alternate Dark Dominion universe. Three level two chase cards, slightly harder to find in packs, feature new characters from upcoming Defiant titles. The level three chase card set features original pieces of penciled art by *Dark Dominion* artist Steve Ditko.

The River Group is also releasing a 30-

THE NEW 150-CARD X-MEN SET FROM FLEER ULTRA IS GURANTEED TO TURN SOME HEADS!



ABOVE: SAMPLES OF THE RIVER GROUP'S DEFIANT CARDS.

BELOW: TOPPS' WILDC.A.T.S AND THE MAXX TRADING CARDS.

card Splatter Bowl I tin set. On the planet Plasm, the most popular sport is Splatterball, a game in which the losing team is put to death and then thrown into the communal biomass to be grown into a new living being. Another cool thing about the game is that everything involved—including the ball, playing surface, goal posts, and so on—is alive. (Talk about your Hindu philosophy being taken to an illogical extreme!) The set, available in December, carries a meager suggested retail price of $10.

William Shatner's TekWorld is coming your way as a card set in late November from Cardz, the same people who crank out Flintstones and Playoff football cards. The set is made up of 100 cards based on the comic book title by ol' Captain Kirk himself. Special inserts include four Tekchrome cards featuring the characters of *TekWorld,* plus hand-signed cards from William Shatner and artist Lee Sullivan. The eight-card packs retail for $1.49 per pack.

LOOKING BACK

It's time to step back and take a look at 1993 and all the sets that helped mold it. The past year has definitely been the biggest and the best ever for non-sports cards. The cards have gotten better and better, and the market continues to get bigger and stronger. Most major sport card manufacturers, who previously would never have even thought about non-sports cards, all contributed and added to the massive growth of this segment of the industry.

SkyBox made the most of the final year of its Marvel license, getting their Masterpieces series 2 in just under the December 31 expiration date. In response to its loss of the Marvel license, SkyBox is beefing up their DC products for 1994. DC cards of the past were not as successful as they could have been, due to the absence of the Batman and Swamp Thing franchises, which were farmed out under separate licenses. No longer will this be the case: starting in '94, all the DC sets can now contain Bats, Swampy, and all their related characters. This may help propel them to the amazing heights once occupied exclusively by Marvel.

The Upper Deck Company, one of the biggest and best in sports, entered the comic card market with a big bang. Already well-known for its quality, Upper Deck really got their non-sports wheels turning under the Pyramid banner with the release of The Valiant Era set. Some of the best-looking chase cards of the year were available here, especially the First Appearance cards, which were very striking and turned out to be a tremendous hit. The Valiant Era cards took quality to the next level, especially with the X-O Manowar SP card, which has been one of the top non-sports singles of the year.

Topps took some steps in the non-sports market this year by acquiring licenses from quite a few of the Image artists. The resulting sets were rather popular, but suffered slightly due to the lateness of most of the Image titles. Some of the sets include Sam Kieth's The Maxx, Jim Lee's WildC.A.T.s, and the Image half of the *Deathmate* crossover, *Deathmate Black* and *Red*. Topps also got its hands on a big hit by securing the rights to produce cards for the movie that was 65 million years in the making, *Jurassic Park*. The film broke gross receipt records in the theaters, and the success spread into all related merchandising, including trading cards. The gold version was an even bigger hit among collectors, and represents one of the few sought-after movie card sets around.

This past year also marked the beginning of the #0 issue trading card series from the River Group. The most notable set of this bunch is *Plasm* #0, which got the ball rolling. Prices for the limited albums hit the high heavens before

coming back to Earth, and the River Group continues in the #0 vein with *Dark Dominion* (see above). *The Good Guys*, the newest Defiant title, remains a possibility for the future.

The River Group also proved that rock 'n' roll was indeed here to stay with this year's release of the Elvis Collection and the Beatles Collection. These sets both proved to be popular sellers, and certainly helped round out the non-sports field with some top-notch music-related entertainment cards.

With all of the other action going on, it might be easy to miss the impact and contributions that SkyBox, king of the non-sports cards, made in 1993. For those of you who missed the highlights, SkyBox made hologram cards as they've never been made before, with the Wolverine hologram in X-Men series 2 and the Spidey vs. Venom hologram in Marvel Universe series 4. These are what holograms should look like! To this day, those two holograms remain among the most sought-after chase cards on the market.

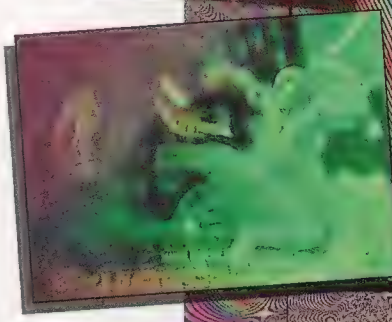
But the most important step SkyBox took this year was signing an exclusive deal with DC Comics to produce its trading cards for the next three years. This year, DC Comics cards didn't fare all too well, for reasons mentioned above, but next year, the license is stronger and better, especially with the revitalization that took place in the DC universe in '93. With the departure of the prized Marvel license, 1994 will be a real test year at SkyBox.

SkyBox had so many significant sets this year that it's hard to pinpoint the one which had the biggest impact. Let's take a look at a few of them. X-Men series 2 was probably the biggest surprise of all the '93 Marvel sets. Because the artwork was not by Jim Lee, the set wasn't as highly ordered as the first series. When the cards came out and customers decided they loved the crisper, cleaner design of the series 2 cards, the set started to fly.

Another milestone set from SkyBox was the release of the Return of Superman set. Unfortunately, the earlier Death of Superman set missed the cutoff date for this 1993 wrap-up issue by oh-so-little, but this Return set, along with the actual return of Supes, the man who made it cool to wear tights, caused quite a stir.

SkyBox's Marvel Masterpieces series 2 was possibly the most important non-sports card release of the year. This set brought to a close the three-year reign of SkyBox over Marvel cards. It was also the sequel to one of the best non-sports sets ever released, series 1. The prerelease hype surrounding the set was enormous and the anticipation for it incredible, unlike that seen for any other non-sports set. Limited to only 17,500 numbered cases, with 20 boxes per case, these cards flew off the shelves everywhere, joining Masterpieces 1 as a benchmark set.

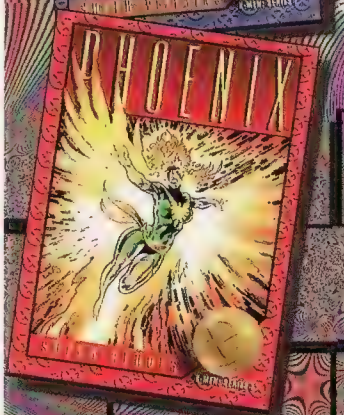
So, as 1993 draws to a close, non-sports card collectors and retailers alike are anxiously awaiting 1994's new products. It should be a truly exciting year.



TOP: DAREDEVIL (AND HIS VERY SHORT LEFT LEG) FROM MARVEL MASTERPIECES 2.

ABOVE: THE AWESOME SPIDER-MAN HOLO FROM MARVEL SERIES 4.

BELOW: X-MEN SERIES 2.



TOP 10 CARDS FOR NOVEMBER

according to Diamond Comic Distributers Inc.

RANK	PRODUCT	PUBLISHER
1	Creators Universe Foil	Dynamic
2	Upper Deck Basketball Series 1 Foil	UD
3	Batman: Animated Series 2 Foil	Topps
4	Stadium Club Basketball Series 1 Foil	Topps
5	SkyBox 1 Basketball Foil	SkyBox
6	Warriors of Plasm Tin Set	River Grp.
7	Deep Space Nine Foil	SkyBox
8	Ultra Series 1 Basketball Foil	Fleer
9	Topps Series 1 Basketball Foil	Topps
10	Good Guys Genesis Foil	River Grp.

FROM THE BEST OF 1993 TO A

PEAK EXPERIENCE IN 1994

X-MEN, ™ & © 1993 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

The X-Men continued to be Marvel's most successful property, spawning a highly rated Saturday morning cartoon show as well as the nations' best selling line of action toys.

WIZARD

All-New In Ninety-Four! Catch It!

FROM THE BEST OF 1993 TO A

PEAK EXPERIENCE IN 1994

Spawn ™ & © 1993 Todd McFarlane

Todd McFarlane's Spawn was the best-selling comic all year long. Todd's fantastic art style and some high-profile guest writers combined to make this title a sales juggernaut.

WIZARD

All-New In Ninety-Four! Catch It!

© 1981 MARVEL COMICS

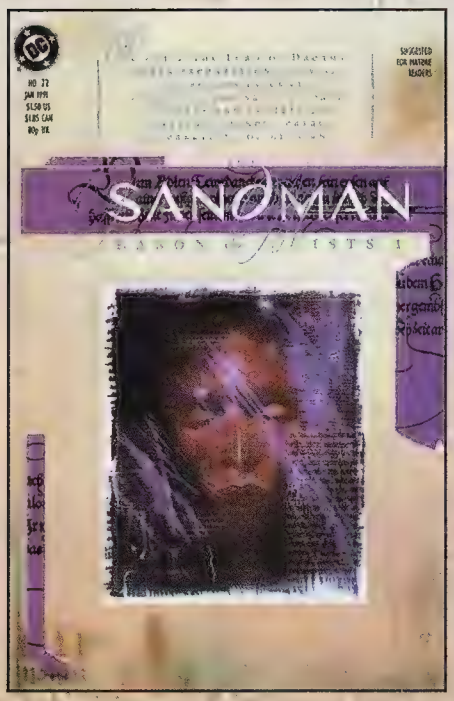
Daredevil #168

Artist: ***Frank Miller***
Writer: ***Frank Miller***
Publisher: ***Marvel Comics***
Release date: ***January 1981***

What a great story in this mag. Those of you out there who may not be too familiar with Mr. Miller's work should really check it out. He's currently doin' the *Sin City: A Dame to Kill For* series at Dark Horse, and his past work on Daredevil and Batman are some of the best comics ever to feature those characters (and the *Ronin* mini-series was pretty spiffy, too).

Now, before you think this is Good & Cheap, let's get into what makes this book so bloody hot. One word: Elektra. The sai-wielding ninja who recently made a comeback in the pages of *Daredevil* makes her first appearance here. Her origin is here, too.

Now, we know this book is already worth a couple a bucks, but with her newfound popularity and exposure, *DD* #168 is a sure-fire hot sleeper—just try to find one in mint!



© 1991 DC COMICS

Sandman #22

Artist: ***Kelley Jones***
Writer: ***Neil Gaiman***
Publisher: ***DC Comics***
Release date: ***January 1991***

Anybody else notice that more and more of the Comic Watch books these days are really great stories? That's the way it should be: comics that're hot not because of special-limited-edition-gold foil-only-seven-made crap, but because of story content, art, or historical importance. Hmmm...what say I step off this soapbox and get on with what makes this book so Comic Watch-ish...?

As we explained in Wizard News last month and in Picks From the Wizard's Hat this month, there are some major changes in the works for Vertigo's *Sandman*, which, if rumors are correct, will lead to the death of the Sandman. That would leave the job of "Dream" open, possibly to be filled by Daniel, a very special baby with a very complex history (see Wizard Looks Back, Wizard News #28).

Yeah, you guessed it, the little rugrat makes his first appearance in this title. As an added note, keep in mind that *Sandman*, especially back in the issue #22 range, had a very limited print run, which makes this book a little tricky to track down.

☆

FROM THE BEST OF 1993 TO A PEAK EXPERIENCE IN 1994

X-O Manowar © 1993 Valiant Entertainment

Valiant used 1993 to stay on the cutting edge of comic book marketing and promotions, utilizing chromium covers, zero-numbered issues, and the Gold Logo Program.

WIZARD

All-New In Ninety-Four! Catch It!

CONTESTATION

Name

Age Phone #

Address

City State Zip

QUESTIONS

1) What is the name of Boba Fett's ship?

2) Boba Fett's armor is like that worn by which band of warriors during the Clone Wars?

3) What did Princess Leia call herself in *Return of the Jedi* when she was dressed as a bounty hunter?

4) What was the name of the bounty hunter Han Solo killed in *Star Wars*?

5) Who hired Boba Fett to catch Han Solo in *The Empire Strikes Back*?

UNSCRAMBLED ANSWER:

™ & © 1993

CONTESTATION

The Bounty Hunter's Reward!

Sounds exciting, no? Well, it is, and here's what we're doing. In honor of the world's coolest bounty hunter (Boba Fett, scourge of Harrison Fords and Wookies alike), Wizard is holding a Boba Fett trivia contest. All you have to do to win the incredible Star Wars stuff we're giving away is answer the five trivia questions below, scramble the highlighted letters together and decipher the bounty hunter code. Good luck!

Grand Prize (and the only prize)

A set of the limited edition gold foil *Star Wars: Dark Empire #1-#6* and a copy of the limited edition *Star Wars: Dark Empire* hardcover, signed by artist Cam Kennedy and writer Tom Veitch, and numbered 817, out of only 1,000 made!!

How to win?

Answer the questions in the boxes supplied. In each answer you will find a colored letter. After you have completed all the questions, the colored letters from the answers, when unscrambled, will form the contest code word. Fill out the official entry form supplied on the previous page (or a photocopy), with the unscrambled answer and send it to:

Bounty Hunter Code
P.O. Box 5001
Monsey, NY 10952-8001

STORM TROOPERS, STAR WARS ™ & © 1993 LUCASFILM LTD.

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and IG-88. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, the name of and information about the store where you purchase comics, and the Boba Fett code on an "Official Entry Form", a 3x5 index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Boba Fett Code, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent of substitution prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules here of. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 17, 1994. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly-completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 18, 1994 by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after February 1, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Boba Fett Winners, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

PICKS

FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

HERE'S A LIST OF THE HOTTEST BOOKS SHIPPING IN DECEMBER!

Bloodshot #0

Writer and Penciler: Kevin VanHook
Inker: Dick Giordano
Release Date: December
Cover Price: $3.50

His mysterious saga began in the pages of the now-legendary *Rai* #0, but that was the saga of Bloodshot the killing machine, not Bloodshot the man. We all know that before he became the nanite-powered super-assassin he is today, he was a mafia hit man named Angelo Mortalli. Mortalli was known as a loose cannon during his mafia days, and his contract, so to speak, was sold to Iwatsu and his Project Rising Spirit. Readers of *Rai* #0 know how Geoff the Geomancer was led to Project Rising Spirit through his relationship with the Earth, and how the nanite-infused blood (later known as the Blood of Heroes) that coursed through Bloodshot's veins was vital to Earth's future (check out *Rai & the Future Force* for that story).

Underneath another phenomenal Joe Quesada wraparound chromium cover (with inks by the legendary Dick Giordano, to boot!) is an illumination of Mortalli's past as a mafia hit man, and his assignment to kill Gilad Anni-Padda, the Eternal Warrior. We know that Bloodshot and the Eternal Warrior are very good friends these days, having pulled each other's fanny out of the fire on numerous occasions, but what will happen when the devious Mortalli tries to kill a man who for all intents and purposes cannot be killed? Let's just say that "Bloodshot" isn't as apt a name for this book as "Bloodbath"! Valiant mainstay Kevin VanHook handles both the writing and penciling details on this titanic tale, and the aforementioned Giordano provides his always-spectacular finishing work.

BLOODSHOT™ & © 1993 VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS INC.

Codename: Stryke Force #1

Artist: Brandon Peterson
Writer: Marc Silvestri
Release Date: December
Cover Price: $1.95

Image unleashes the first spin-off book from the well-received world of Marc Silvestri's *Cyberforce. Codename: Stryke Force* showcases the four-armed (must take him a minute and a half to shower!) member of Cyberforce known as Stryker, and his band of mercenary buddies. Bloodbow, Tempest, Black Anvil, and Kill Razor comprise the Stryke Force, a super-bodyguard service for international clients, who are ready for anything and everything, and for whom no assignment is too tough. This band of Silvestri's self-proclaimed "adrenalin junkies" is ready to face a shower of bullets, actually digging on the fact that they are paid to cheat death.

Silvestri, aware of the overcrowded summer market, decided to pull this book for distribution until December. Also aware of the corrective phase of the market, Silvestri decided to do away with the obligatory gimmick cover; instead, we lucky readers will be getting a wraparound cover by series artist Brandon Peterson, with inks by Silvestri himself. This resolicitation should also help keep this promising series on target for its ship dates—just another instance where the Image boys are listening to what the fans are looking for and trying to deliver it.

Daredevil #325

Artist: Scott McDaniel
Writer: D. G. Chichester
Release Date: December 7th
Cover Price: $2.50

If you've been following the "Fall from Grace" storyline which kicked off in *Daredevil* #319, you know that some big changes have been taking place in the life of Matt Murdock and those around him. By now, we're all aware that Daredevil has a new costume, and that that nosy little intern reporter Sara Harrington has weaseled her way into Ben Urich's private notes and revealed Matt Murdock's secret identity to a sleazy tabloid publication. We've seen the reappearance of Elektra, albeit in a slightly different form. We've also seen some very hot back issues rise in price. What are all of these shenanigans leading up to?

Why, *Daredevil* #325, a special 48-page double issue, complete with a 30th anniversary poster insert. In this issue we'll find out what happens with the mysterious "about face" virus, Sara Harrington will get a little payback from Ben, and an entirely new status quo will develop for this title. Anything else in this issue? Assistant editor Pat Garrahy says, "Matt Murdock, in a very vague sense, will die at the end." Join the whole gang in issue #326 for "Tree of Knowledge," the next major story arc, in which we'll see, according to Garrahy, "an entirely different Daredevil."

DAREDEVIL ©& ™ 1993 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Sandman #57

SANDMAN © & ™ 1993 DC COMICS

Artist: Marc Hempel
Writer: Neil Gaiman
Release Date: December 28th
Cover Price: $1.95

The time has come for loyal Sandfans to grieve. The book's final major storyline, "The Kindly Ones," begins here in issue #57. Many of the characters who have appeared in the series over the past six years (Lucifer Morningstar, Mervyn Pumpkinhead, the Three Witches, the Corinthian, Cluracan, and others), will reappear, forever altering the state of the Endless. Will "The Kindly Ones" spell the end of Morpheus and the arrival of an all-new Lord of the Dreamworld? Writer Neil Gaiman has stated many times over the years that he felt the story of Morpheus had an ending; this, apparently, is where it starts.

"The Kindly Ones" will appear in the next four issues of *Sandman*, but the tales of the Endless aren't about to end. Neil Gaiman will continue with a batch of stand-alone stories, for an as yet undetermined period of time. These works will feature the pencils of Marc (*Breathtaker*, *Gregory*) Hempel, whose style seems to fit the quirky nature of the series quite well.

In addition, *Sandman* #57 contains an eight-page preview of the five-issue Vertigo mini-series also shipping this month, *American Freak: A Tale of the Un-Men*.

Break-Thru #1

Artist: George Pérez
Writer: Gerard Jones
Release Date: December
Cover Price: $2.50

The first Ultraverse crossover was kicked off last month in *Exiles* #4; it leads directly into the pages of *Break-Thru* #1. *Break-Thru* is intended to solidify the entire Ultraverse, and many of the ultrahumans will meet each other for the first time. The book is based on the "Jump Start Effect," an ancient phenomenon best exemplified by the lightning that gave the Strangers their powers in *Strangers* #1. A mysterious artifact hidden on the moon working in conjunction with the Jump Start Effect has put the entire world in jeopardy, and it's up to the combined might of the ultras to solve this enormous problem.

This isn't your normal "world in jeopardy" storyline, since most of the action takes place off-planet. The world-renowned pencils of George Pérez will grace this issue and *Break-Thru* #2, the follow-up issue shipping next month. *Break-Thru* will run through the pages of every Ultraverse title for the month of December, and at the conclusion of this gigantic crossover, one of the Ultraverse books will be altered forever! Sounds pretty ominous to us.

BREAK-THRU © & ™ 1993 MARVEL COMICS INC

MORE PICKS

The following pages compile the grooviest titles shipping for the month of December. Also listed are books carrying the *Wizard* recommended reading RRA sign—comics that have the most potential to deliver a solid, well-written story, and ones that shouldn't be overlooked on the comic book rack.

Action Comics #696

DC COMICS With the big *AC* #700 a mere four months away, Superman uses his newfound outer space abilities to visit a lonely planetary guardian who waits for his race to return. This seemingly sad story is by Roger Stern, Jackson Guice, and Denis Rodier. **$1.50**

Adventures of Superman #509

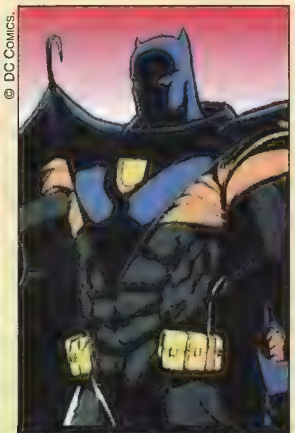
DC COMICS Still in outer space after his fight with Lobo in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #30, Superman encounters Auron (the clone of the Guardian, who also has some of Superman's DNA), who last appeared in *Legacy of Superman* #1. They fight an alien being, but Auron is knocked out by something connected to Superman! (Is it B.O.?) By Karl Kesel, Barry Kitson, and Ray McCarthy. **$1.50**

Batman #504

DC COMICS "Knightquest: The Crusade." Believing that Catwoman has stolen a supply of nerve gas, Batman pursues her, ignorant of the fact that she's actually tracking down the real thief! Of course, they have a senseless brawl while Gotham is in jeopardy. (Makes you wonder where their priorities are, eh? Kids these days...) By Doug Moench and Mike Manley, with a cover by Kelley Jones. **$1.50**

Batman: Shadow of the Bat #24

DC COMIC "Knightquest: The Crusade." Batman tries to break up a gang that smuggles babies into Gotham City. Plus, we find a link to Batman's own past as we learn a little more about his mother. By Alan Grant and Bret Blevins, with a cover by Brian Stelfreeze. **$1.75**



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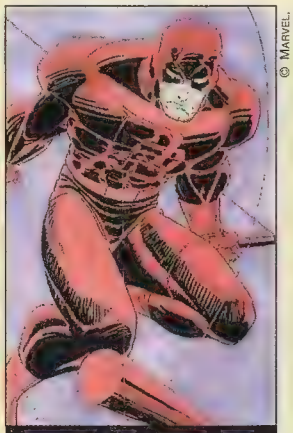
Batman: Shadow of the Bat #24



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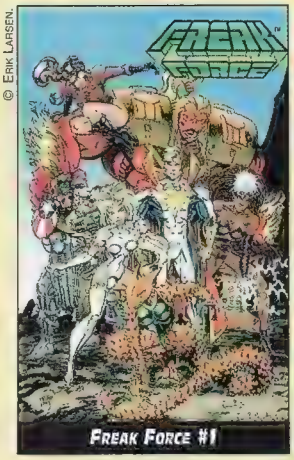
Daredevil: Man Without Fear #5



© Erik Larsen.

Freak Force #1

© Marvel.

Gambit #3

Cable #8

MARVEL The final battle between Cable and Stryfe (wow, just like their final battle in "The X-Cutioners Song," and in the *Cable* mini-series, and...). In the midst of the battle, a startling discovery is learned in this last chapter of the "Father/Son" storyline. Guest starring Professor X, Cyclops, and Jean Grey. By Fabian Nicieza and Aron Weisenfeld. **$2.00**

RRA Daredevil: Man Without Fear #5 (of 5)

MARVEL This is the issue Daredevil fans have been waiting for! The series comes to a stupendous conclusion as the origin of Daredevil is fully revealed. All of the events of the past four issues converge! This final issue is by the "masters" of DD—Frank Miller, John Romita, Jr., Al Williamson, Joe Rosen, and Christie Scheele. Look for the special foil-embossed cover by Romita, Jr. and Williamson. **$2.95**

Detective Comics #671

DC COMICS "Knightquest: The Crusade" continues, as Azrael clashes with the Joker for the first time! Wait until the Joker figures out he's not dealing with the crusty old Batman. A cool confrontation by Chuck Dixon, Graham Nolan, and Scott Hanna. Cover by Kelley Jones. **$1.50**

Freak Force #1

IMAGE Erik Larsen's new team supreme from *Savage Dragon* runs rampant in its own book, in which they become a team of bounty hunters! Hey, just in time to face the eco-terrorist known as Major Disaster. By

MORE PICKS

Larsen, Keith Giffen, Victor Bridges, and Karl Story. **$1.95**

GAMBIT #3 (OF 4)

MARVEL Gambit takes off for France (they hate Americans, you know) in a desperate search for the mysterious elixir that's somehow connected to the Externals. Meanwhile, Rogue plays nursemaid to Belladonna. By Howard Mackie and Lee Weeks. **$2.00**

GREEN LANTERN #48 & #49

DC COMICS "Emerald Twilight," Parts 1 and 2 of 3. In this much-anticipated storyline, Hal deals with the destruction of Coast City (in the first part), then goes rogue in order to restore his home town (in the second part)! Who can stop Hal's rampage? Can anyone spell...Sinestro? I knew you could! By Ron Marz, Hugh Haynes, Bill Willingham, and Romeo Tanghal. **$1.50 EACH**

JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN: FAITH #3 (OF 4)

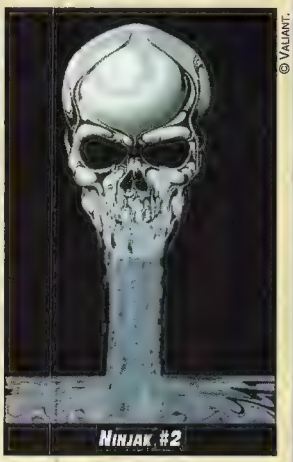
LEGEND/DARK HORSE The first official Legend crossover! Next Man Danny runs across Mike Mignola's Hellboy in a segment drawn by Mignola! Is this a crossover? Well...maybe. In the meantime, Jack gets religion—the hard way, as he envisions the life of Jesus Christ as if it took place in the Garden! Familiar biblical characters are warped to look like familiar people. Also, in *MIV*, we find out just where the heck Mark has spent the missing seven years of his life. This jam-packed issue is by John Byrne with colors by Matt Webb. Cover by Mignola. For mature readers. **$2.50**

MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER/ NEXUS #1 (OF 2)

VALIANT/DARK HORSE This momentous inter-

© DARK HORSE/ VALIANT.

MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER/NEXUS #1



© VALIANT.

NINJAK #2

company crossover, which takes place prior to Valiant's *Magnus* #1, starts off with an alien being offering peace and prosperity to North Am—but at what cost? This one's by Nexus creators Mike Baron and Steve Rude, with inks by Gary Martin. Painted cover by Rude. **$2.95**

MARVELS #2 (OF 4)

MARVEL Be one of the paparazzi at Mr. Fantastic and Invisible Woman's wedding when the Sentinels attack, planting the seeds of mutant hysteria. Look for the special acetate cover of the Avengers and the X-Men by series painter Alex Ross! Masterfully written by Kurt Busiek. "Alex and I have a disagreement over whether #2 or #3 is the best I've ever written," says Busiek. "#2 explains why a guy like the Human Torch is a celebrity and a guy like Iceman is a monster. It has the heights of adulation and the depths of hatred and racism." **$5.95**

NINJAK #2

VALIANT "Black Water," Part 2 (of 2). The Weaponeer's organization has been destroyed, and Ninjak seeks vengeance on the much-maligned Dr. Silk and WEBNET. By Mark Moretti, Joe Quesada, and Jimmy Palmiotti. **$2.25**

PREDATOR: BAD BLOOD #1 (OF 4)

DARK HORSE There's a spree of murders and mutilation in the New Jersey Pine Barrens (hey, I wonder if Black Condor was one of 'em?), and ex-CIA agent John Pulnick is accused of the crimes. But he knows who's really doing it (and so do we)...a wacko Predator that not only murders humans, but also kills other Predators! Add to the mix a second Predator who wants to see the renegade pay for its crimes. Special all-disembowelment issue by Evan Dorkin, Derek Thompson, and Chris Warner. **$2.50**

© DC COMICS.

GREEN LANTERN #48 & #49

© JOHN BYRNE.

JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN: FAITH #3

FROM THE BEST OF 1993 TO A PEAK EXPERIENCE IN 1994

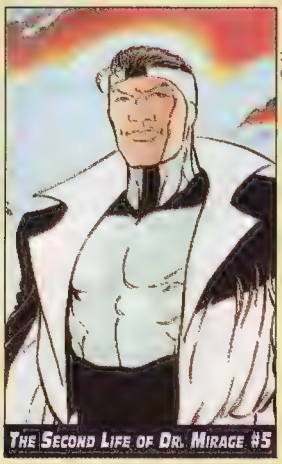
Malibu made bold strides in 1993, enjoying the success of their new superhero universe, the Ultraverse. They also announced their new creator-owned and rock and roll imprints, Bravura and Rock-It Comix respectively.

WIZARD

All-New In Ninety-Four! Catch It!

MORE PICKS

© Rob Liefeld.
Prophet #4


© Valiant.
The Second Life of Dr. Mirage #5

Prophet #4

IMAGE In the aftermath of his battle with Bloodstrike, Prophet is attacked by the mysterious woman known as Judas! Is she from his past, his future...or something else? (Insert ominous music here.) By Rob "I was Bedrock and liked it" Liefeld and Dan "I haf beeg mussles" Panosian. **$1.95**

Savage Dragon #7

IMAGE You've waited a mini-series and six issues for this one! Finally, the all-out battle between the Dragon and Overlord, smack dab in the middle of the New Jersey Pine Barrens! (Only kidding on that last part.) By Erik Larsen. **$1.95**

The Second Life of Dr. Mirage #5

VALIANT Part one of the Dr. Mirage/Shadowman crossover (which seems kinda logical, seeing that they both hate that jerkweed Master Darque so much), as Darque lures Mirage in for the kill. This story is continued in *Shadowman* #23 when Shadowman races to the good doctor's rescue. But will he get there in time? (Psst! Let's start a rumor. Dr. Mirage is gonna die. Pass it on.) By Bob Layton, Bernard Chang, and Ken Branch. **$2.50**

Shadowhawk III #2 (of 4)

IMAGE Prepare yourselves for a most shocking revelation as the story of Shadowhawk's origin continues! Meanwhile, the Regulators take the ball and run with it as they take on Dedline, a new villain who's sure to kill ya. By Jim Valentino and Chance Wolf. **$2.50**

Sin City: A Dame To Kill For #2 (of 6)

LEGEND / DARK HORSE Main man Dwight comes face to face with Ava, the woman from his past, and her bodyguard, Manute. Ava has some nasty secrets to spill about her husband, and Manute...well, let's just say he's not lookin' fer sum perty pitchers to glimpse. Look for the matte laminated cover by the guy who also did the interior: Frank Miller. For mature audiences. **$2.95**

Spawn #19

IMAGE Todd McFarlane returns from a lengthy stay in the New Jersey Pine Barrens! Well, not only that, but this issue marks the first appearance of the Freak! Who's the Freak? Is he a hero? A villain? Just a freak? Only Todd knows for sure. **$1.95**

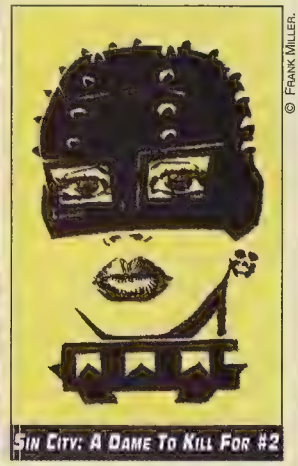
The Spectre #15

DC COMICS Since the Spectre has practically condemned mankind, the Phantom Stranger gathers Etrigan the Demon, Dr. Fate, and John Constantine to challenge him. But can even these mystical giants talk some sense into this guy? By the team of John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake, who are doing the finest work of their careers. Cover by Kelley Jones. "The Spectre has reinterpreted his function; whereas he used to sit in judgment of individuals, he now sits in judgment of all mankind," says *Spectre* editor Dan Raspler. "In #15, the mystic forces of the DC Universe gather to stop him." Ooo. **$1.75**

Superboy #1

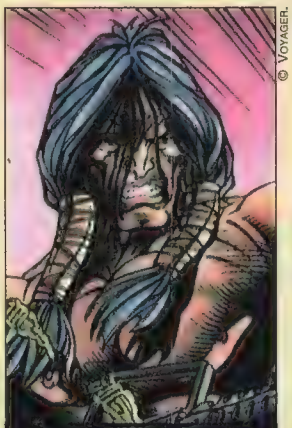
DC COMICS Because you demanded it! Spinning off from *Adventures of Superman*, "the Kid" now has his own title, set in the New Jersey

© Jim Valentino.
Shadowhawk III #2


© Frank Miller.
Sin City: A Dame To Kill For #2

MORE PICKS

© DC Comics.
Superboy #1


© Voyager.
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter #9

Pine...no, wait, Hawaii. In this premiere issue, Superboy confronts a three-armed villain (does Marc Silvestri know about this?) who has a score to settle with him. Let's hope they don't level Honolulu in the process. By Karl Kesel, Tom Grummett, and Doug Hazlewood. **$1.50**

Superman: The Man of Steel #30

DC COMICS This special collector's edition has a Colorform-like cover on which you can place and replace Supes and Lobo, the stars of this issue. Lobo, dedicated to finishing the job that Doomsday started, drags Superman into space to suffocate him. Little does Lobo know that Superman is now unaffected by the airless void of space. This story continues in *L.E.G.I.O.N. '94* #63. By Louise Simonson, Jon Bogdanove, and Dennis Janke. **$2.50**

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter #9

VALIANT "People of the Spider," Part 3 (of 3). Will Regan be dino-dessert? Not if Turok has anything to say about it. This is the climax to a terrific storyline by writer/penciler Tim Truman, with inks by Sam Glanzman. Truman says, "*Turok*'s meant a lot to me. *Turok* was always one of my favorite books as a kid. What I've wanted to do [with this storyline] is return his personality to the personality he had in the old Gold Key issues." **$2.50**

Uncanny X-Men #309

MARVEL Wait'll you get a load of Professor Xavier's reaction when he finds out about Jean Grey and Scott Summers' impending wedding. By Scott Lobdell and John Romita, Jr. **$1.25**

Venom: The Enemy Within #1 (of 3)

MARVEL Graced by a glow-in-the-dark cover, this first issue pits Venom against Morbius and a ton of demons who want to claim San Francisco for their own. (Hope nobody tells Tony Bennett that!) Will the "Lethal Protector" wind up dead? (Probably not, seeing as he has two more issues to star in.) By Bruce Jones and Bob McLeod. **$2.95**

Warriors of Plasm #5

DEFIANT This issue marks the first appearance of Prudence (from the upcoming *Prudence & Caution*). The war for the Org is far from over, and the warriors are fighting for their life on Earth against the Demons of Darkedge. By Jim Shooter, David Lapham, and Mike Witherby. Also, note the lower cover price! **$2.50**

WildC.A.T.s #7

IMAGE "Killer Instinct," Part 3. Things really start to heat up in the love triangle between Warblade, Misery, and Ripclaw (Ripclaw loves Warblade?), as Misery pits the two unwitting heroes against each other. By Jim Lee, Brandon Choi, and Scott Williams. **$1.95**

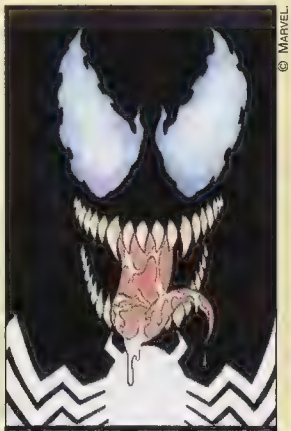
X-Force #31

MARVEL Val Cooper and X-Factor are not happy campers in this issue because X-Force wants to destroy the New Jersey Pine Bar...Oh, for God's sake, we beat this joke to death. X-Force is out to destroy Project Wideawake. There. By Fabian Nicieza and Troy Daniel. **$1.25**

X-Men #29

MARVEL Marvel didn't know what was going into this book as of *Wizard* #29's deadline, so we've made up our own story. This issue, Magneto, using his newly augmented magnetic powers, pulls all the testosterone out of Bishop, who quits the team and becomes a back-up singer for RuPaul. Also, the Beast explodes. **$1.25**

© Marvel.
Uncanny X-Men #309


© Marvel.
Venom: The Enemy Within #1

THIS MONTH'S NUMBER ONES!

COMIC BOOK COLLECTORS place a great deal of importance on #1 issues. Since it's tricky to determine whether a book will succeed, you have to choose your comics very carefully. Number one issues have been known to appreciate considerably when a series becomes very popular. Here we have compiled for you all the #1 issues shipping for December. Happy hunting!

Avengers Log #1
Marvel Comics $1.95

Bartman #1
Bongo Comics $2.95

Bloodshot #0
Valiant $3.50

Bill the Galactic Hero #1
Topps Comics $2.95

Break-Thru #1
Ultraverse $2.50

Code Name: Stryke Force #1
Image $1.95

Death's Head II/Killpower: Battletide III #1
Marvel Comics $1.95

Dragon Star #1
Caliber Press $2.95

Dragon Strike #1
Marvel Comics $1.25

Enemy #1
Dark Horse $2.50

Evil Ernie #0: New Year's Evil
Chaos! Comics $2.50

Fighting American #1
DC Comics $1.50

Frank #1
Nemesis DIR $2.50
NEWS $1.75

Freak Force #1
Image $1.95

G-Force #1
Marvel Comics $1.95

Godzilla vs. Barkley
Dark Horse $2.50

Krey Special #1
Caliber Press $3.95

Legends of the World's Finest #1
DC Comics $4.95

Lobocop #1
DC Comics $1.95

Magnus: Robot Fighter/Nexus #1
Valiant $2.95

The Mark #1
Dark Horse $2.50

Megaton Christmas Special #1
Entity Comics $2.95

NFL Pro Action #1
Marvel Comics $2.25

Planet Patrol #1
ARComics $2.50

Predator: Bad Blood #1
Dark Horse $2.50

Radioactive Man #1
Bongo Comics $2.95

Silver Surfer vs. Dracula #1
Marvel Comics $1.75

Simpsons Comics and Stories #1
Bongo Comics $2.95

Sirens #1
Caliber Press $3.95

Spider-Man: Mutant Agenda #0
Marvel Comics $1.25

S.T.A.T. #1
Majestic $2.25

Steel #1
DC Comics $1.50

Stormwatch Yearbook #1
Image $3.50

Stratostear #1
Caliber Press $2.95

Superboy #1
DC Comics $1.50

Supergirl #1
DC Comics $1.50

The Thing From Another World: Eternal Vows #1
Dark Horse $2.50

The Three Musketeers #1
Marvel Comics $1.50

Triumphant Unleashed #1
Triumphant $2.50

Ultraman #1
Nemesis $1.75

Venom: The Enemy Within #1
Marvel Comics $2.95

Wild Angels #1
Marvel Comics $1.95

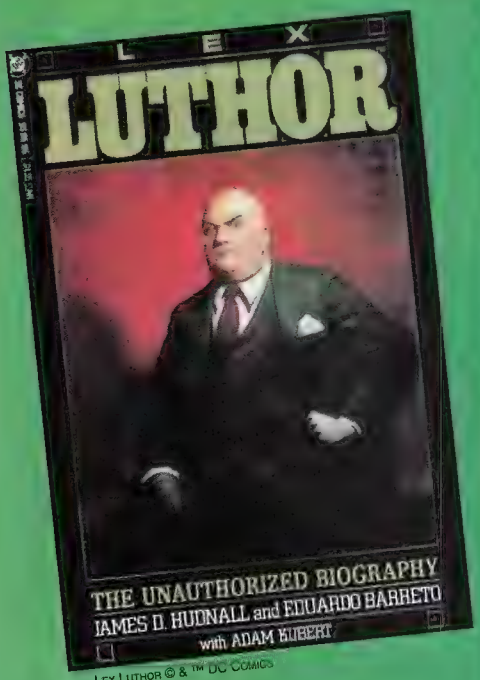
X-Men Adventures Season II #1
Marvel Comics $1.25

Zen Intergalactic Ninja #0
Entity Comics $3.50

Zorro #0
Topps Comics $1.00

good & cheap

Good-readin' books you can still pick up cheap!



LEX LUTHOR © & ™ DC COMICS

Lex Luthor: The Unauthorized Biography

Writer: *James D. Hudnall*
Artist: *Eduardo Barreto*
Color Artist: *Adam Kubert*
Current Guide Value: *$4*

This wonderful one-shot Prestige Format book features a sweeping story of intrigue and suspense, as well as new insights into old characters.

Although Lex Luthor is the subject of the plot, he is by no means the star of the story. The main character is down-and-out journalist Peter Sands, who feels he can get his "big break" by doing a biography of Luthor—no matter the cost. Sands digs around for all the dirt he can find on Luthor, and what he uncovers ultimately proves to be his undoing. Does Sands finally discover the truth behind Luthor? Are Lex Luthor and Clark Kent responsible for his demise? Does Luthor dance and romance? All these questions and more are painfully answered in grueling detail.

James D. Hudnall has written one of his finest stories in this tale. It's carefully woven and includes excellent plot twists. This book also trumpets the new style of Eduardo Barreto, who has arguably done his best work on these pages. Adam Kubert manages to augment Barreto's moody pages with his fantastic color palette. The book is graced by a portrait of Luthor painted by Eric Peterson (actually modeled after DC editor Brian Augustyn!). This book is solid from cover to cover. ☆

FROM THE BEST OF 1993 TO A PEAK EXPERIENCE IN 1994

All Milestone Characters ™ & © 1993 Their Respective Owners

Milestone Media debuted their line of culturally diverse superheroes, entering into a unique distribution agreement with DC in which they retained total ownership and creative rights to their characters.

WIZARD

All-New In Ninety-Four! Catch It!

TOP 100 NOVEMBER 1993

Here's the list for NOVEMBER... a countdown of the most-ordered titles as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.

1. Uncanny X-Men #308
2. Spawn #18
3. X-Men #28
4. Ninjak #1
5. Action Comics #695 (Direct)
6. WildC.A.T.s #6
7. X-Men 2099 #4
8. Cyberforce #2
9. Batman #503
10. Superman #85
11. Adventures of Superman #508
12. X-Force #30
13. Shadowhawk III #1
14. Gambit #2
15. Superman: The Man of Steel #29
16. Detective Comics #670
17. Wolverine #77
18. X-0 Manowar #25
19. Savage Dragon #6
20. X-Factor #98
21. StormWatch #7
22. Venom: The Madness #3
23. Simpsons Comics #1
24. Team Youngblood #3
25. Phantom Force #1
26. Amazing Spider-Man #385
27. Troll #0
28. Prophet #3
29. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #23
30. Good Guys #1
31. Spider-Man #42
32. Codename: Stryke Force #4
33. Cable #17
34. Gen[13] #3
35. Catwoman #6
36. Supreme #8
37. Iron Man #300
38. Spider-Man 2099 #15
39. Images of Shadowhawk #9
40. Daredevil: Man Without Fear #4
41. Vanguard #2
42. Itchy & Scratchy Comics #1
43. Superpatriot #4
44. Turok: Dinosaur Hunter #8
45. Nova #1
46. Daredevil #324
47. Warriors of Plasm #4
48. Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi #2
49. Dark Dominion #2
50. Solitaire #1
51. New Harbingers #26
52. Web of Spider-Man #108
53. Ren & Stimpy #14
54. Sin City: A Dame to Kill For #1
55. Bloodshot #13
56. Marvels #1
57. Robin #3
58. Spectacular Spider-Man #208
59. Magnus: Robot Fighter #33
60. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #56
61. Incredible Hulk #413
62. Batman & Judge Dredd: Vendetta
63. 2099 Unlimited #3
64. Solar, Man Of the Atom #30
65. Lobo #2
66. Action Comics #695 (Newsstand)
67. Aliens/Predator: Deadliest of the Species #3
68. Second Life of Doctor Mirage #4
69. Fantastic Four #384
70. X-Men Adventures #15
71. Ghost Rider #45
72. Secret Weapons #6
73. Punisher #86
74. Silver Surfer #88
75. Eternal Warrior #19
76. Excalibur #73
77. Avengers #370
78. Punisher 2099 #12
79. Doom 2099 #13
80. Shadowman #22
81. Thunderstrike #4
82. H.A.R.D. Corps #15
83. Punisher War Journal #61
84. Tribe #5
85. Rai & the Future Force #18
86. Archer & Armstrong #19
87. Hawkeye #1
88. Showcase '94 #1
89. Punisher War Zone #23
90. Death Gallery #0
91. Starblast #1
92. Avengers West Coast #102
93. Marvel X-Men Collection #0
94. Ghost Rider/Blaze: Spirts of Ven. #18
95. Scarlet Witch #1
96. Green Lantern #49
97. Avengers Strike File #1
98. Thor #470
99. Blaze #2
100. New Warriors #43

Who's in the TOP 100?

	# books in top 10	# books in top 50	# books in top 100
Marvel	3 (-1)	16 (-1)	44 (+6)
DC Comics	3 (+1)	8 (-1)	16 (-2)
Image	3 (+1)	16 (+1)	16 (+1)
Valiant	1 (+1)	3 (-2)	14 (+1)
Dark Horse	0 (-0)	1 (-0)	3 (+1)
Defiant	0 (-0)	3 (+1)	3 (+1)
Malibu	0 (-0)	1 (+1)	1 (-9)
Bongo	0 (-0)	2 (+2)	2 (+2)
Axis Comics	0 (-0)	0 (-0)	1 (+1)
Topps	0 (-0)	0 (-0)	0 (-0)
Mirage	0 (-0)	0 (-0)	0 (-1)
Continuity	0 (-0)	0 (-0)	0 (-0)

(+ or - indicates change from last month's listings)

TOP 10 NOVEMBER 1992

1. Superman #75
2. Pitt #1
3. X-Men #16
4. Bloodshot #1
5. Uncanny X-Men #296
6. X-Force #18
7. Doom 2099 #1
8. X-Factor #86
9. Spawn #7
10. Spider-Man 2099 #3

FROM THE BEST OF 1993 TO A PEAK EXPERIENCE IN 1994

Jeff Smith's whimsical *Bone* gained steam as the year progressed, proving that a high-quality, black-and-white, independently produced comic could stand out on the stands, even during 1993's superhero onslaught.

WIZARD

All-New In Ninety-Four! Catch It!

1 ■ Your age?_____

2 ■ How often do you purchase Wizard?

1 ☐ every month
2 ☐ nearly every month
3 ☐ 2-3 times a year

3 ■ How many Wizards do you own? 1 ☐ 0-6 2 ☐ 7-12 3 ☐ 13-19 4 ☐ 20-26 5 ☐ every one

4 ■ Where do you buy Wizard?

1 ☐ comic book store
2 ☐ variety store
3 ☐ drug store
4 ☐ bookstore

5 ■ What do you always read?

1 ☐ feature articles
2 ☐ letters
3 ☐ Brutes & Babes
4 ☐ Palmer's Picks
5 ☐ Toying Around
6 ☐ Power Up!
7 ☐ Wizard of Cards
8 ☐ Market Watch
9 ☐ Magic Words
10 ☐ Wizard News
11 ☐ Speak Up
12 ☐ Drawing Board
13 ☐ Hunk & Babe
14 ☐ CBIQ
15 ☐ Comic Watch
14 ☐ Picks
15 ☐ Top 100
16 ☐ Top Ten
17 ☐ Number Ones
18 ☐ Price Guide
19 ☐ Conventions

6 ■ List the three things you usually read first in Wizard:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

7 ■ Do you read/share your copy of Wizard with your brother, sister, friends?

1 ☐ no
2 ☐ yes, with 1 friend
3 ☐ yes, with 2-3 friends
4 ☐ yes, with over 3 friends

8 ■ Who would you most like to seal in a cave with a hibernating bear?

1 ☐ Macauley Culkin
2 ☐ Blossom
3 ☐ Pauley Shore
4 ☐ that's a sick question

9 ■ List the three Wizard things you hardly ever read:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

10 ■ Aggh. Think hard. How much time do you spend thumbing through Wizard?

1 ☐ 1-2 hours/month
2 ☐ 2-3 hours/month
3 ☐ over 3 hours/month

11 ■ How many comics do you buy a month?

1 ☐ 2-5 2 ☐ 6-8 3 ☐ 9-12
4 ☐ over 12

12 ■ How many comics do you own?

1 ☐ 20-30
2 ☐ 31-60
3 ☐ 61-100
4 ☐ 101-150
5 ☐ 150-300
6 ☐ over 300

13 ■ What other trashy magazines do you read?

1 ☐ Previews
2 ☐ Advance
3 ☐ Starlog
4 ☐ Fangoria
5 ☐ Comic Buyers Guide
6 ☐ Beckett (any sport)
7 ☐ Tuff Stuff
8 ☐ Trading Cards
9 ☐ Sports Cards

14 ■ If you were trapped in an old cellar, starving,which would you eat last?

1 ☐ fuzzy cracker found on floor
2 ☐ mystery mushroom
3 ☐ rusty rainwater
4 ☐ big, crunchy (but nutritious) beetle

15 ■ Which "excessive consumer appetite" toys do you own?

1 ☐ inline skates
2 ☐ skateboard
3 ☐ mountain bike
4 ☐ paintball gun
5 ☐ motorcycle
6 ☐ skiis
7 ☐ snowboard
8 ☐ bat/glove
9 ☐ hoop/bball
10 ☐ ice skates

11 ☐ supersoaker
12 ☐ RC car
13 ☐ dirt bike
14 ☐ Walkman/etc
15 ☐ stereo
16 ☐ CD player
17 ☐ ATV
18 ☐ VCR
19 ☐ computer
20 ☐ TV

16 ■ GAME FREEKS' CATEGORY NINE:

Heavy duty hardware

own		want
1 ☐	Nintendo	2 ☐
3 ☐	SNES	4 ☐
5 ☐	NEC Turbografix	6 ☐
7 ☐	Sega	8 ☐
9 ☐	NeoGeo	10 ☐
10 ☐	Gameboy	11 ☐
12 ☐	Lynx	13 ☐
14 ☐	Gamegear	15 ☐

17 ■ What are your favorite hobbies?

1 ☐ blading
2 ☐ boarding
3 ☐ biking
4 ☐ hoops
5 ☐ computers
6 ☐ models (no, no - the tiny plastic kind)
7 ☐ D&D
8 ☐ music (play instrument)
9 ☐ music (tapes/CD's)
10 ☐ art/drawing/illustration

18 ■ Do you collect

1 ☐ baseball trading cards
2 ☐ basketball trading cards
3 ☐ football trading cards
4 ☐ hockey trading cards
5 ☐ Marvel trading cards
6 ☐ DC trading cards
7 ☐ Movie/fantasy cards
8 ☐ Wizard trading cards

19 ■ Which kinds of cards do you:

own		want/more
1 ☐	Donruss	2 ☐
3 ☐	Fleer	4 ☐
5 ☐	Pro Set	6 ☐
7 ☐	Score	8 ☐
9 ☐	Topps	10 ☐
10 ☐	Upper Deck	11 ☐

20 ■ What movies did you go to this year:

1 ☐ Jurassic Park
2 ☐ Free Willy
3 ☐ Last Action Hero
4 ☐ Cliffhanger
5 ☐ Alladin
6 ☐ Hotshots Part Deux
7 ☐ Homeward Bound
8 ☐ A River Runs Through It
9 ☐ Dennis The Menace
10 ☐ The Fugitive
11 ☐ Demolition Man
12 ☐ Ground Hog Day

21 ■ Do you rent videos

1 ☐ 1-2/month
2 ☐ 2-5/month
3 ☐ over 5/month

22 ■ If you wanted to put three Wizard departments or columns in the old dumpster, never to be seen again, which would they be?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

23 ■ If you collect sports trading cards, have you

1 ☐ bought a copy of our new magazine Collectors' Sportslook?
2 ☐ seen a copy of Collectors' Sportslook?
3 ☐ want to get a copy but can't find it at your newstand?

24 ■ Why don't you subscribe to Wizard and save a ton of money? - you're taking us for a pair of sunglasses, so you know a good deal when you see it;

1 ☐ I'm too lazy to send in the subscription form;
2 ☐ You haven't tempted me with enough free, expensive stuff;
3 ☐ I've never had enough money at one time (what a lame-O excuse);
4 ☐ I don't know what a postal money order is or I don't have a checking account or a credit card;
5 ☐ My parents would have a cow if Wizard showed up in the mailbox;

25 ■ Which TV shows do you watch?

1 ☐ Batman:The Animated Series
2 ☐ Beavis and Butthead
3 ☐ Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman
4 ☐ Ren & Stimpy
5 ☐ seaQuest DSV
6 ☐ Simpsons
7 ☐ Star Trek:Deep Space Nine
8 ☐ Star Trek:The Next Generation
9 ☐ X-Men Animated Adventures

26 ■ Would you like to see a bunch of contests every month, with a lot of prizes, or one big contest with one huge prize?

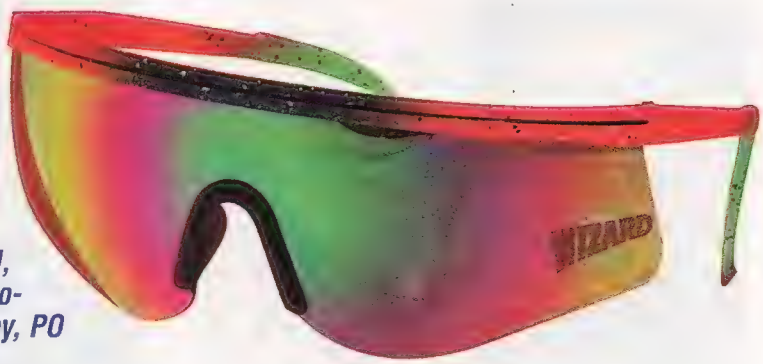
1 ☐ Many Contests
2 ☐ One big contest

27 ■ What characters would you like to see featured on upcoming Wizard covers?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Get these wild shades free!

You send in this survey, BOOM!, the first 500 we get, (and that's a lot), get a pair of the coolest shades this side of the French Riviera. These prisma-colored puppies are so wild, even the Boz would want 'em. Photo-copies ok - mail to: Sunglass Survey, PO Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001



name _____

address _____ city _____ state _____ zip _____

home telephone number
(uh-oh who's gonna call?
Maybe the Big Cheese.) _____

TOP 10 DECEMBER 1993

Wizard, by staying in touch with hundreds of dealers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the hottest books throughout the country. Here are the 10 best-selling comics for December '93.

1

© Marvel.

Daredevil #319
Artist: Scott McDaniel
Writer: D.G. Chichester

We here at *Wizard* are about to coin a new phrase for the phenomenon through which books get hot without the benefit of a wheelbarrow full of hype behind them. *Daredevil* #319 was a great recent example of a book that screamed up the buck-o-meter as a beneficiary of Underordered Surprise Syndrome (from here on in known as USS). The news of the direction shift taking place in the *Daredevil* storyline didn't get out until the orders for #319 were already in and print runs were set, so dealers were subsequently caught short. What happened then was a serious mad scramble for the kick off book of the now-legendary "Fall from Grace" story arc. So *Daredevil* #319 is historical, plus it's got a very cool cover of DD getting tossed like a salad off of the Chrysler Building—which makes this book #1.

2

© Marvel.

Moon Knight #55
Artist: Stephen Platt
Writer: Terry Kavanagh

Look in the bottom right corner of this book. What does it say? Splatt! That appears to be the manner in which newcomer Stephen Platt has hit the industry. *Splatt!* This book hit with a splatt, and another dreaded USS book was born. Collectors everywhere wanted to know who this guy was, and the book disappeared in a jiffy. With a direct sales print run in the 40,000 copy neighborhood, and Platt quickly rising up the Marvel food chain, this book shows no signs of slowing down. Let's face it, fans, when an artist can make a splash—er, splatt?—in the industry working on a character as uninteresting as Moon Knight, he's on his way to a promising future. The Top 10 ride for this book could be a lengthy one.

3

© DC Comics.

Green Lantern #46
Artist: M.D. Bright
Writer: Gerard Jones

When the super-popular (no pun intended) "Reign of the Supermen" storyline was nearing its conclusion and readers were hitting the comic stands in droves, DC snuck this little gem into the mix. It's painfully obvious that this book was an important part of the Superman storyline, and not unlike *Sword of Azrael* or *Vengeance of Bane*, this issue could have some far-reaching implications. Green Lantern (the Hal Jordan version) is about to undergo a major character overhaul, and the destruction of Coast City by Mongul and the Supercyborg appears to be one of the big reasons why Hal's thinking none too regularly these days. Let's hand it to the DC editorial staff: the continuity and development their titles have displayed over the past year plus is the major reason for the strong revival of their flagship titles.

4

© Marvel.

Daredevil #320
Artist: Scott McDaniel
Writer: D.G. Chichester

The first chapter in the "Fall from Grace" storyline is still smokin', as the deadly USS continues to wreak havoc throughout the entire Top 10. The major character upheaval still prevalent in the *Daredevil* title initially caught dealers red-faced, seeing how this book was pretty much sold out the day it hit the shelves. Readers nationwide wanted to get in on this intriguing storyline (with some great contour dense artwork by series penciler Scott McDaniel), and the lack of copies caused a big-time scramble, with prices skyrocketing accordingly. It appears, with three Hornhead titles in the Top 10, that a good kick-in-the-seat-of-the-pants storyline is, and should be, all it takes to make a character (and a title) popular.

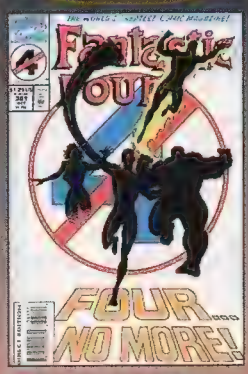
5

© Malibu.

Prime #2
Artist: Norm Breyfogle
Writer: G. Jones & L. Strazewski

Here's a title that's been getting quite a bit of action lately in terms of both new and back issue sales, and it's no wonder. This series has everything that makes a good mainstream superhero comic an enjoyable read: great characters, good action, excellent artwork, strong scripting, good pacing...need we go on? Any fans of superhero fare will do themselves an extreme disservice if they don't check into this excellent book (and the rest of the Ultraverse line, too). Why does this issue seem to be the Ultraverse back issue bin big bopper? Fans who want to complete their runs of the Ultraverse titles are finding that #2 issues are rather scarce, and *Prime* appears to be the #1 title on the Ultraverse collector's hit list.

6



© Marvel.

Fantastic Four #381
Artist: Paul Ryan
Writer: Tom DeFalco

Another Marvel book hits the hot 10 and it's *Fantastic Four*, of all things! It feels like we're in the early '80s instead of the '90s. Sudden death hits the FF: Reed Richards gets turned into ash, courtesy of long-time nemesis and all-around bad guy Dr. Doom (boy, did I hyphenate the crud out of that sentence!). When it was announced that one of the Fantastic Four would be killed, the news didn't travel through the comic grapevine all that quickly, and thus the book was underordered. What happened was the usual USS (sooo prevalent here in the Top 10): a small order + big demand = hot seller. If only they didn't go killin' off Dr. Doom at the same time they killed off Ol' Stretcho. Oh well, they'll both be back before ya know it.

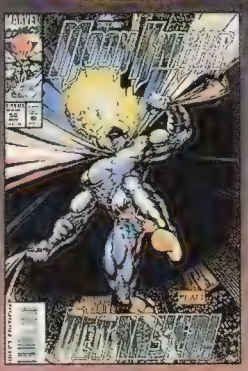
7

© Marvel.

Wolverine #75
Artist: Adam Kubert
Writer: Larry Hama

Everyone's favorite mutant berserker gets messed up by Magneto, and we all want to know what happens to the poor little guy. Unless you've been living under a rock, you already know that Magneto threw Logan a severe beating, extricating the adamantium from his body and testing his mutant healing factor's limits. As readers of this issue know, Wolvie lives, and in a pretty gruesome scene, we find out that his claws are actually bone. No longer able to help the X-Men like he used to, he strikes out alone, and we can follow his solo adventures in his own title. Also, check out the new art team of penciler Adam Kubert and inker Mark Farmer. These guys are awesome separately, but together they should take this title to new heights.

8



© Marvel.

Moon Knight #56
Artist: Stephen Platt
Writer: Terry Kavanagh

No secret as to what jammed this book into our countdown this month. Stephen Platt's artwork has thrust him into the limelight faster than any penciler in recent memory. This Platt character (quite a nice chap, actually) has gotten the art fans in an uproar with his highly energized, extremely stylized penciling approach. The latest in a long line of Canadian comic pros is accumulating a fan following quicker than a hair spray salesman in a Long Island nightclub (that's pretty durn fast, gang). His next assignment should garner him an even larger fan following: he'll be taking a step into the mutant arena and plying his talents on the enigmatic time traveler Cable. Seems like the dynamic Platt is having himself quite a run these days, and the fans are taking notice in droves.

9

© Marvel.

Daredevil: Man Without Fear #1
Artist: John Romita, Jr.
Writer: Frank Miller

You know, it sure does seem like the comic industry, not unlike the music business, is in a retro phase these days. While people are dancing to the Bee Gees in clubs and listening to Meatloaf again, comic fans have put Marvel titles in the spotlight (seven books in our Top 10), and we're reading Frank Miller Daredevil stories again. This certainly isn't a bad thing (well, except for the Bee Gees and Meatloaf part), as anyone who's read this series will attest. Mr. Miller is giving us fans the definitive origin of the character who has seen all kinds of ups and downs lately, in terms of sales as well as characterization. The cover on this baby is quite nice, too, one of those rare books for which the enhancement on the front is just an appetizer to the good-reading main course underneath.

10

© DC Comics.

Catwoman #1
Artist: Jim Balent
Writer: Jo Duffy

The entire Batline of books is certainly doing well these days, and deservedly so. The editors of this line have kept continuity flowing smoothly, and the stories have all been great reads. The new Catwoman title is no exception. The initial story arc in the book focuses on the antagonism between Catwoman and Bane, and bubbles with interesting subplots. The artwork, by fan-favorite babe-maestro Jim Balent, is solid throughout, and the writing by Jo Duffy is meritorious. We're still hoping for a little more insight into the Selina Kyle aspect of the lead character, but the action-oriented content of the first batch of issues has been a gas nonetheless. For more excellent Bat-related action, don't forget to check out the new Robin series—that one's a winner as well. ☆

TOP 10 Hottest Comics of 1993

After collecting data from the Top 10 Comics list of the past year (*Wizards* #18-#29), *Wizard* presents 1993's hottest comics.

© Voyager.

1

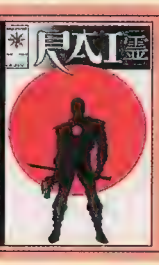
MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER #12

Artist: Gonzalo Mayo
Writer: Jim Shooter

The first Valiant appearance of Turok, which lasted four months straight at the #1 spot. Last saw the #1 slot in May (*Wizard* #22).

© Voyager.

2



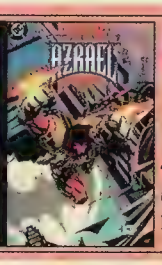
RAI #0

Artist: David Lapham
Writer: Bob Layton

The prelude to *Deathmate*, this issue peaked at the #3 slot in June (*Wizard* #23).

© DC Comics.

3



BATMAN: SWORD OF AZRAEL #1

Artist: Joe Quesada
Writer: Dennis O'Neil

The first appearance of Azrael, the current Batman. Peaked at the #2 position in October (*Wizard* #27).

© Todd McFarlane.

4

SPAWN #4

Artist: Todd McFarlane
Writer: Todd McFarlane

An Image #0 coupon book, and the conclusion of the Spawn/Violator fight. Peaked at the #4 position in March (*Wizard* #20).

© Voyager.

5

BLOODSHOT #6

Artist: Don Perlin
Writer: Kevin VanHook

The first appearance of Joe Quesada's good friend Ninjak. Took the coveted #1 slot in July (*Wizard* #24).

© DC Comics.

6

VENGEANCE OF BANE #1

Artist: Graham Nolan
Writer: Chuck Dixon

The first appearance and origin of the man who broke the Dark Knight. Peaked at #4 in July (*Wizard* #24).

© Voyager.

7

RAI #4

Artist: Joe St. Pierre
Writer: David Michelinie

An unbelievably short-printed book (roughly 29,000), which peaked at the #2 slot in March (*Wizard* #20).

© Voyager.

8

SHADOWMAN #16

Artist: Bob Hall
Writer: Bob Hall

The first appearance of Dr. Mirage. Peaked at #2 in August (*Wizard* #25).

© Voyager.

9

RAI #5

Artist: Joe St. Pierre
Writer: David Michelinie

Another short-printed book (about 28,000, which makes this book and *Rai* #4 among Valiant's rarest issues), which peaked at the #2 in May (*Wizard* #22).

© DC Comics.

10

BATMAN #497

Artist: Jim Aparo
Writer: Doug Moench

Batman's last stand (no pun intended). King of the hill with its #1 ranking in August (*Wizard* #25).

Wizard Market WATCH

by
Jon Warren

1993: The Year In Review

Looking back over the past year, it's amazing how the comics market grew! When Superman died, America mourned, then rushed to the nearest comic shop to catch a piece of history. Once inside the local shop, Joe Public got hooked on comics. And the snowball began to roll.

In 1992, a few "kids" left their safe and secure jobs at Marvel to go form their own comic book company. Many industry experts were skeptical. Most insiders figured the young guys had made a mistake. The company was called Image Comics—and in 1993, it kicked some serious butt. The success of the "kids" at Image, along with the phenomenal success of Valiant Comics, proved to everyone that there was a big market for high quality independent comics. Move over, Big Two!

While other hobbies were in the doldrums, comic books exploded. CBS News reported that sales of comic books had boomed into a $750 million annual business. Wall Street gave comic books its vote of confidence by sending Marvel stock to all-time highs.

Unquestionably, comic books were hot in '93. But they will be even hotter in '94. The growth of the comic book market is just getting started. The momentum of 1993 will roll on for a number of years.

Let's take a look at what happened during the last year.

January

The big news in January was the death of Superman in *Superman* #75. The national media exposure that this issue received created a phenomenon unrivaled in comic book history. Retailers underestimated the demand; many dealers reportedly sold out within an hour after placing the issue on the stands. The black-bagged direct sales copies were snapped up, and prices began escalating rapidly. Within two weeks after its release, the comic was selling for $25 and up. Retailers were caught completely by surprise, never expecting the comic to go up in value, and pretty soon they were clamoring for stock to satisfy local demand.

Except for *Superman* #75, the hottest back issues in the market were all from Valiant. For Valiant, some of the bigger money books were *Solar* #10, *Magnus* #12, and *Harbinger* #1. At this point in 1993, the rampant speculation on pre-*Unity* Valiant books was starting to affect the market. Prices were rising rapidly as collectors clamored for the issues. *Wizard* told readers to keep a strong eye on *Solar* #3, the first appearance of Toyo Harada, and *Shadowman* #8, the first appearance of Valiant's new head villain, Master Darque.

Taking a look in the crystal ball, we talked about *Spawn* #8, by Alan Moore. Image had built its following mainly upon the talent of a few artists, but this issue marked the addition of an important writer to the Image crew. We talked about the Peter David/George Pérez team-up in *Incredible Hulk: Future Imperfect*, a great two-issue mini-series worth going back and reading again. In our honorable mention department, we talked about the new *Venom* mini-series. Given the big demand for *Amazing Spider-Man* #361-363, we knew that this series would give a lot of bang for the buck.

Wizard Comic Watch spotlighted *Avengers Annual* #10, the first appearance of Rogue, and *Solar* #3, the first appearance of Toyo Harada.

Picks From the Wizard's Hat for comics shipping in December 1992: *Venom* #1, *Shadowman* #11, *Punisher 2099* #1, *Spawn* #8, *Archer & Armstrong/Eternal Warrior* #8.

Wizard #17 Top 10: *Magnus* #12, *Spawn* #4, *Bloodshot* #1, *Shadowhawk* #1, *Eternal Warrior* #4, *Rai* #4, *Rai* #3, *Amazing Spider-Man* #101, *Harbinger* #4, *Shadowman* #8.

February

Wizard noted the ever-decreasing distance between the card and comic fields. As this trend developed, comics gained a new audience, present and former sports cards collectors. Little did we know that this would develop into one of the megatrends of '93!

We talked about the book *Sandman* readers had been waiting for: *Death* #1, a solo story for Sandman's big sister, written by Neil Gaiman himself! It was, and still is, a very hot book. Then we spotlighted Gaiman again, in *Spawn* #9. McFarlane knows a good writer when he sees one!

In the back issue market, the big mover continued to be *Superman* #75. The media attention surrounding the event created an instant collector's item, with prices as high as $75.

Aside from the death of Superman, Valiant comics were the hottest items around. *Bloodshot* #1, which was highly anticipated and heavily ordered by retailers, became one of the few comics in history which were highly speculated upon and actually did go up in value.

Speculation in Valiant issues was rampant at this point. *Rai* #0, featuring the origin of Bloodshot, was particularly hot in February, making it into our Top 10 for the first time.

The hottest Image comics this month were *Shadowhawk* #1 (with the

foil-embossed cover), *WildC.A.T.s* #2, and *Cyberforce* #1.

Marvel comic books, previously unbeatable on the new issue racks, took a back seat to Valiant and Image in the back issue market. But in the Silver Age market, the so-called key issues were selling very well.

Meanwhile, *Ren & Stimpy* #1 was selling strong at the $4-$8 range.

In the Silver Age market, *Magnus: Robot Fighter*, *Doctor Solar*, and *Turok: Son of Stone*, all published by Gold Key in the 1960s and 1970s, were skyrocketing due to the success of the Valiant line.

In our Comic Watch, we spotlighted *X-Men* #49 and *X-Men* #54, two Silver Age books with strong potential.

Picks From the Wizard's Hat for comics shipping in January 1993: *Darker Image* #1, *Eternal Warrior* #9, *WildStar: Sky Zero* #1, *Amazing Spider-Man* #375, *Death* #1.

Wizard #18 Top 10: *Superman* #75, *Bloodshot* #1, *Eternal Warrior* #4, *Eternal Warrior* #5, *Shadowhawk* #8, *Magnus* #12, *Magnus* #5, *Spawn* #4, *Rai* #0, *WildC.A.T.s* #2.

March

Valiant new releases and back issues steamrolled along. It looked as though Valiant would completely dominate the new issue and back issue market for the foreseeable future. There was widespread speculation that Valiant would topple Marvel or DC and stake a permanent claim to a massive comic book market share. The market went into pandemonium as collectors scrambled for the few available pre-Unity Valiants. Likewise, dealers scrambled to load up on what appeared to be a long-term gravy train.

No one was paying much attention to what was happening in other parts of the market. Valiant, in March of '93, had conquered the world.

In our Comic Watch, we spotlighted *X-Men* #4-5, the first appearances of Omega Red and Maverick, respectively.

Wizard #19 Top 10: *Magnus* #12, *Solar* #10, *Rai* #0, *Eternal Warrior* #4, *Spawn* #4, *Eternal Warrior* #6, *Rai* #4, *Venom* #1, *Superman* #66, *Superman Special* #1.

Picks From the Wizard's Hat for comics shipping in February: *Rai* #9, *StormWatch* #1, *Magnus* #24, *Spawn* #10, *Hellstorm* #1.

April

There was a little more action in Marvel back issues this month. With prices for certain Valiant and Image books quickly moving out of the reach of some collectors, many Marvel back issue skillet burners began to look tempting. We mentioned *X-Men* #4-5. *New Mutants* #98, the first appearance of Deadpool, was a slightly more expensive pick. And demand for *Amazing Spider-Man* #300 was really taking off. For deep-pocketed collectors, we suggested a look at *Iron Fist* #14, the first appearance of Wolverine's archfoe Sabretooth. With Sabretooth's upcoming mini-series, this book had nowhere to go but up.

Image books were consistently among the best-selling books in the

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

1 **Todd McFarlane** *Spawn/Batman*

2 **Joe Quesada** *Ninjak*

JOE SCHUYLER

3 **Jim Lee** *WildC.A.T.s*

4 **Stephen Platt** *Moon Knight, Cable*

5 **Frank Miller** *Sin City*

LYNN VARLEY

6 **Marc Silvestri** *Cyberforce*

7 **Erik Larsen** *Savage Dragon*

8 **Bart Sears** upcoming: *Violator*

9 **Dale Keown** *Pitt*

10 **Sam Kieth** *The Maxx*

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

1 **Frank Miller** *Sin City*

LYNN VARLEY

2 **Neil Gaiman** *Sandman*

AL ORTEGA

3 **Peter David** *Incredible Hulk, Aquaman: Time and Tide*

4 **Jim Shooter** *Warriors of Plasm* (he's really tall)

AL ORTEGA

5 **John Byrne** *Next Men*, upcoming: *Warriors of Plasm*

6 **Alan Moore** *1963* (he's really spooky)

MITCH JENKINS

7 **Jim Starlin** upcoming: *'Breed*

AL ORTEGA

8 **Matt Wagner** *Sandman Mystery Theatre*

9 **Dan Jurgens** *Superman*

AL ORTEGA

10 **Mike Grell** *Shaman's Tears*

LIBERTY STUDIOS

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS AND WRITERS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE DEALER SURVEY.

market, but this month, none of the company's books took any jumps. Some non-market-related stumbling blocks were mentioned, including the company's infamous shipping delays.

In Valiant titles, the ultrarare *Rai* #3-4 were leading the pack. Elsewhere in the Valiant market, we lowered the price on *Bloodshot* #1, but predicted it would resume its climb up the charts once it firmly established itself at the new price level.

In our Comic Watch, we spotlighted *X-O Manowar* #4, the first appearance of Shadowman, and the *Fantastic Four Special* #5 from way back in 1967. *FF Special* #5 is extra-special because it is the first time Silver Surfer starred in his own solo story.

Wizard #20 Top 10: *Magnus* #12, *Rai* #4, *Rai* #3, *Spawn* #4, *Pitt* #1, *Ren & Stimpy* #1, *Rai* #0, *Shadowman* #8, *Superman* #66, *Simpsons Comics & Stories* #1.

Picks From the Wizard's Hat for comics shipping in March: *Cable* #1, *Uncanny X-Men* #300, *Magnus* #25, *Young-blood: Strike File* #1, *Spider-Man Unlimited* #1.

May

Collectors and dealers everywhere were biting their nails in anticipation of the return of Superman. Although absolutely no one thought the return of Superman would receive the publicity which had surrounded his death (and everyone was right), no one was planning to ignore it. "We'll be ready and waiting this time," seemed to be the collective subconscious on the subject. Then the soap opera began. Which Superman would be the real Superman? No one knew for sure. Only by following the storylines in each of the Superman titles could one discover which character would be the new Man of Steel.

Turok #1 was a future pick, with the look of a sure-fire winner. When everyone is sure something is going to happen, you can bet your last dollar that it won't. It didn't. The reason *Turok* #1 looked like a sure bet at the time was that Valiant already owned the back issue market. Early Valiants like *Magnus* #12, *Rai* #3-4, *X-O Manowar* #4, and *Solar* #14 were the hottest thing going, commanding top dollar prices.

DC back issues had cooled quite a bit since the release of *Superman* #75, with the death of Superman issue dropping to $24 after having hit highs of $100. This was about the time when the rumors of the death of Batman began to circulate. Hey, this killing-off-sacred-cows thing was getting easier by the minute! If killing Superman could sell millions of copies, why wouldn't killing the Batmeister?

Image Comics were still selling unbelievably well. The cream of the crop were, and still are, *Spawn*, *Youngblood*, and *WildC.A.T.s*.

In our Comic Watch, we spotlighted *Web of Spider-Man* #18, the "was-it-Venom-or-wasn't-it" issue, and *Thor* #391, the intro of Eric Masterson (a.k.a. Thunderstike).

Wizard #21 Top 10: *Magnus* #12, *Rai* #3, *Rai* #4, *X-O Manowar* #4, *Rai* #0, *Solar* #14, *Spawn* #4, *Superman* #66, *Shadowman* #8, *Simpsons Comics & Stories* #1.

Picks From the Wizard's Hat for comics shipping in April: *Turok* #1, *X-Men Unlimited* #1, *Bloodstrike* #1, *Deathblow* #1, 1963 #1.

June

DC took the top five spots in the best-seller category this month. Retail orders for *Adventures of Superman* #500, *Action Comics* #687, *Superman* #78, *Adventures of Superman* #501, and *Superman: The Man of Steel* #22 went through the roof. And if that wasn't enough for DC's stock, the "Knightfall" storyline in *Batman* #492-#500, *Detective Comics* #659-#666, *Shadow of the Bat* #16-#18, and *Showcase '93* #7-8 started picking up steam. DC definitely had all the momentum in the summer of '93.

Marvel collectors didn't have any significant new releases to grab their attention, so Marvel collectors heated up the back issue market. Prices for *Amazing Spider-Man* #300 continued to climb higher and higher, while X-fan interest was sparked by the return of Magneto storyline running through the X-titles.

We reported a slump in the gold giveaway books issued by Valiant (and we were the first fan magazine to do so). We theorized that too many of the other companies were jumping on the limited edition bandwagon, thereby lessening the overall appeal of this type of promotion. That, coupled with the fact that these books priced themselves out of the reach of most collectors, moved them from the "must have" list to the "pass" list.

In our Comic Watch, we spotlighted *Iron Man* #121, the first appearance of James Rhodes, and *Sandman* #8, the first appearance of Death.

Wizard #22 Top 10: *Magnus* #12, *Rai* #3, *Rai* #4, *Rai* #0, *Spawn* #4, *Spawn* #3, *Youngblood* #3, *X-O Manowar* #4, *Solar* #14, *Batman: Sword of Azrael* #1.

Picks From the Wizard's Hat for comics in May: *X-O Manowar* #0, *WildC.A.T.s Trilogy* #1, *Youngblood Yearbook* #1, *Shadowhawk II* #1, *Spawn* #13.

July

Valiant continued to introduce important new characters without telling anyone where they'll appear. With first appearances and origin stories being among the most likely to take a trip in the fast lane, collectors jumped at the slightest rumor of a major character appearance. We told our readers about the first appearance of Ninjak in *Bloodshot* #6, and the first appearance of Dr. Mirage in the pages of *Shadowman*. We reported that sales were brisk for *Turok* #1 in its first week of release.

Lightning did not strike twice for DC with the return of Superman in *Adventures of Superman* #500. Many retailers overordered, expecting a repeat of the mass hysteria which surrounded the death of Superman, and were caught holding the bag. On the other hand, the back issue market for Superman issues began to heat up. Superman and Superman-related titles from the Golden Age, Silver Age, and even the 1970s shrugged off a lengthy hibernation and started to attract some long-deserved attention. In particular demand were those stories about Superman's supposed death, duplicate Supermen, and "wedding" issues. In Silver Age news, we reported the continued strong demand for *Showcase* and *Brave and the Bold* issues.

With the exception of *Ren & Stimpy*, recent Marvels weren't selling well as back issues, but Silver Age Marvels were rockin'. Early *Amazing Spider-Man* and the hard-to-find

Incredible Hulk #1 were flying out of stores during the month of July, according to the dealers with whom we spoke.

Various independent back issues from the '80s continued to come into their own. Books like *Cerebus* #1 and *Comico Primer* #2 (the first Grendel) were on the want lists of many collectors, but were seemingly impossible to find.

In our Comic Watch, we spotlighted *X-Factor* #6, the first appearance of Apocalypse, and *New Mutants* #29, the first appearance of Strong Guy (Guido).

Wizard #23 Top 10: *Batman* #492, *Detective Comics* #659, *Rai* #0, *Bloodshot* #6, *Spawn* #4, *Youngblood* #2, *Vengeance of Bane* #1, *Sword of Azrael* #1, *Spawn* #5, *Amazing Spider-Man* #300.

Picks From the Wizard's Hat for comics shipping in June: *Deathmate Prologue*, *Sabretooth* #1, *Cyberforce* #0, *Secret Weapons* #1, *Deadpool* #1.

August

In late summer, we talked about how Batman and Superman were key DC issues and setting the pace for the rest of the market. The issues containing the Batman "Knightfall" storyline were really flying, with *Sword of Azrael* and *Vengeance of Bane* leading the way. We warned readers not to overlook the "Knightfall" crossovers in *Shadow of the Bat* #16-#18 (hope you were listening). Surprisingly, after taking a drop in the market, bagged *Superman* #75 "Death of Superman" and "Funeral for a Friend" back issues started to move again.

In Valiant news, we commented on how the unannounced appearances of major new characters continued to create a stir for certain Valiant back issues. The Valiant flavor of the month was *Shadowman* #16, the first appearance of Dr. Mirage.

Dark Horse Comics #8, with the first appearance of X (a Comics' Greatest World character), was a surprise hit. *Star Wars: Dark Empire* issues were commanding premium prices, with issue #1 moving from $14 in June to $25 in October!

Harris Comics' resurrection of *Vampirella* created interest in those and other Warren magazine titles from the late '60s and early '70s. In June, *Vampirella* #1 was listed at cover price ($2.95). By October, it was selling at $8 and headed up.

Looking at Modern Age issues from the '70s, *Giant-Size X-Men* #1 (first appearance of the New X-Men) and *Incredible Hulk* #181 (first full appearance of Wolverine) were topping the charts. These two comics are arguably the two most important comics published during the decade of the 1970s.

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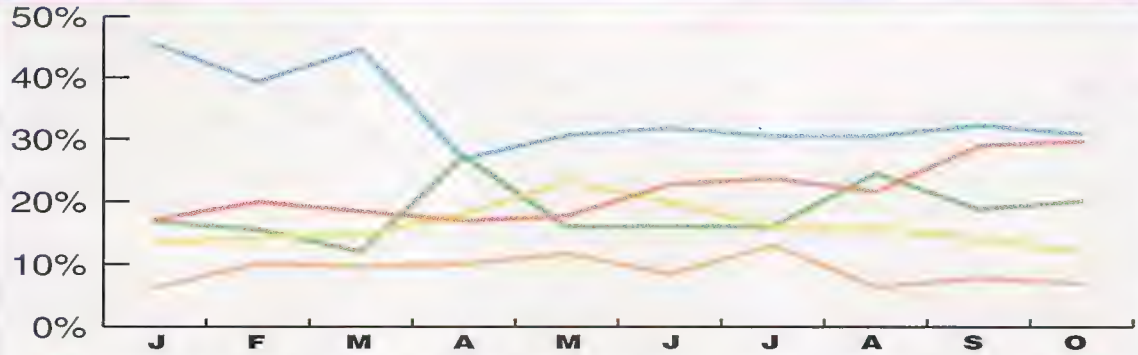
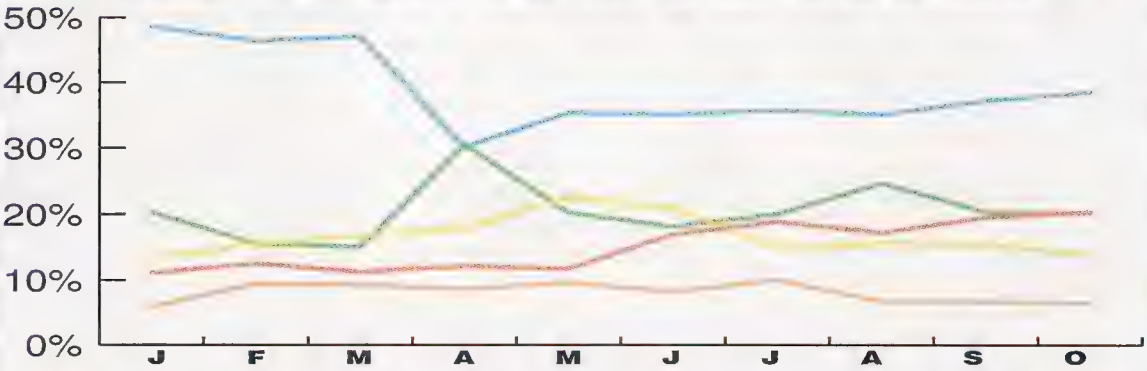


Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for January to October 1993, according to Capital City Distribution. Note: from January to February, Image's and Malibu's numbers are combined.



Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for January to October 1993, according to Capital City Distribution. Note: from January to February, Image's and Malibu's numbers are combined.

Legend: Marvel DC Comics Image Valiant Others. **Points of interest:** April saw DC take the #1 spot away from Marvel for the first time in years, thanks to the "return" of Superman. August was also a good month for DC, with the release of *Batman* #500 and *Superman* #82. Note how DC, Image and Valiant seem to be feeling the pinch of "Others" climbing the charts as the year progresses. Malibu alone was above 5% on both charts in October, thanks to the popularity of Ultraverse, with rival companies Dark Horse, Defiant and others also gaining a larger fan following.

In our Comic Watch, we spotlighted *Superman: The Man of Steel* #1, the first appearance of the Eradicator, and *Megaton* #1, the first appearance of Erik Larsen's Vanguard.

Wizard #24 Top 10: *Bloodshot* #1, *Shadowman* #16, *Sword of Azrael* #1, *Vengeance of Bane* #1, *Batman* #492, *Spawn* #4, *Spawn* #2, *Youngblood* #2, *Rai* #0, *Amazing Spider-Man* #300.

Picks From the Wizard's Hat for comics shipping in July: *Uncanny X-Men* #304, *Deathmate* (Yellow) and *Deathmate* (Blue), *Deathmate* (Black), and *Savage Dragon* #2/ *Vanguard* #0 (flip book).

September

Batman's for real, but is Superman? That was the big question back in September. Prices for *Sword of Azrael* and *Vengeance of Bane* were moving higher and higher by the week. All parts of the "Knightfall" storyline were flying out of stores. But speculation on just who would be the new Superman kept collectors on their collective feet trying to scramble for the "right" issue that would go up in value.

At Valiant, the Gold *Turok* #1 hit the market and created a bit of a stir. In the back issue market, *X-O Manowar* #4 ruled the roost, moving from $18 in June to $32 in September—a 77 percent increase in just four months!

Spawn continued to dominate the Image back issue scene. In many parts of the country, collectors snapped up issues of *Spawn* as fast as, or faster than, issues of Marvel biggies like *X-Men* and *Amazing Spider-Man*.

At Marvel, the word was "Venom." Early appearances of the character, especially *Amazing Spider-Man* #300 ($70 at the time), were burning hot (and still are).

Without even publishing a comic, Defiant Comics had become the talk of the town. Orders for their *Plasm* card set binders far exceeded the number produced, thanks to a snafu (see "Looking Back," beginning on page 54, for more information about Defiant's problems with *Plasm*). Prices rapidly shot up to $30-$50 around the country.

Malibu Comics' heavy advertising on MTV created a steady demand for Ultraverse titles in their first week of release.

In our Comic Watch, we spotlighted *Magnus* #3, the first appearance of Tekla, and *Weird Mystery Tales* #1, the first appearance of Destiny.

Wizard #25 Top 10: *Batman* #497, *Shadowman* #16, *Bloodshot* #7, *Bloodshot* #6, *Spawn* #2, *Rai* #0, *Sword of Azrael* #1, *Vengeance of Bane* #1, *Amazing Spider-Man* #300, *Batman* #492.

Picks From the Wizard's Hat for comics shipping in August: *Doctor Mirage* #1, *Batman* #500, Warriors of *Plasm* #1, *Deathmate Epilogue* and *X-Men* #25.

October

Superman and Batman were still red-hot.

In our Comic Watch, we spotlighted *Archer & Armstrong/ Eternal Warrior* #8, revealing for the first time that Armstrong and the Eternal Warrior have a third brother, name of Ivar; and *Solar* #23, the first appearance of Solar the Destroyer.

Picks From the *Wizard*'s Hat for comics shipping in September: *Eternal Warrior Yearbook* #1, *Robin* #1, *Wolverine* #75, *Prophet* #1, and *Team Youngblood* #1.

Wizard #26 Top 10: *Superman: The Man of Steel* #25, *Batman* #497, *Bloodshot* #6, *Vengeance of Bane* #1, *Shadowman* #16, *Sword of Azrael* #1, *Bloodshot* #7, *Action Comics* #689, *Rai* #0, *Adventures of Superman* #466.

November

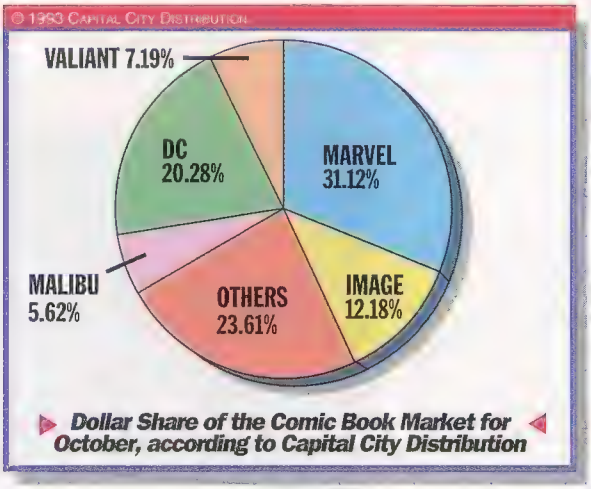
Yours truly came on board as *Wizard*'s Senior Price Guide Editor. Batman and Superman were still ruling, with "Knightfall" and "Reign of the Superman" at the top of the list.

Ren & Stimpy #1, which started the year out at $8, had moved to $22 in our price guide. Our network of *Wizard* advisors continued to report strong demand for this series.

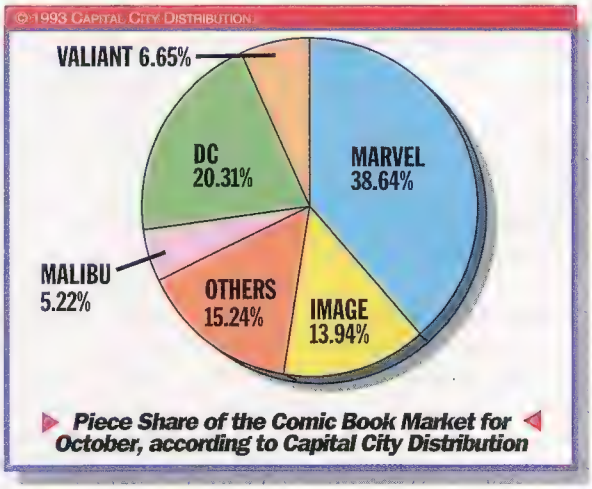
Image and Valiant comics were in a holding pattern, perhaps catching their breath before picking up a new head of steam. Early *Spawn* issues inched up a bit in the price guide, while *Magnus* and *Harbinger* remained pretty much unchanged. A few *Solar* prices moved slightly upward.

In '70s books, we tipped readers off to the original *Sandman* series by Jack Kirby, saying that it was high time it got a little respect. Our Big Two for the month were *Incredible Hulk* #181 and *Swamp Thing* #1 by Berni Wrightson. Demand for these two key issues seemed relentless. In Marvel moderns, we reported the surge in demand for *Star Wars*.

TV and movie tie-in comics, especially with photo covers, were catching the attention of collectors, a trend that we first reported this month. Our picks for the month in



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for October, according to Capital City Distribution



Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for October, according to Capital City Distribution

this department were *Dark Shadows* and *Star Trek* (Gold Key). *Dark Shadows* is a new price guide listing with current values in *Wizard* #29.

In Silver Age markets, DC and Marvel were the leaders. For DC collectors, there continued to be competition for high-grade copies of *Showcase* and *Brave and the Bold*. Over at Marvel, collectors were trying to determine what effect the record selling price of $34,000 for *Amazing Fantasy* #15, the first appearance of *Spider-Man*, would have on the market. Although the sale had occurred at an auction a few months prior, the market had been reeling ever since. Was this a one-time blip on the computer screen, or an indication of the future for high-grade Silver Age keys? Read Market Watch in '94 to find out!

In the Oldies-But-Goodies Golden Age department, we told you about the demand for original *Captain America* issues from the 1940s. Specialists in this area of the market were in unanimous agreement that the future for Golden Age Marvels in all grades is bright. Not to be outdone, however, Superman and Batman issues from 40 years and even further back were brisk sellers, too.

In our Comic Watch, we spotlighted *Uncanny X-Men* #244, the first appearance of Jubilee, and *Dragon's Claws* #5, the first American appearance of Death's Head.

Picks From the Wizard's Hat for comics shipping in July: *Solar* #29, *Harbinger* #25, *Lobo* #1, *Dark Dominion* #1, *Gambit* #1.

Wizard #27 Top 10: *Daredevil* #320, *Sword of Azrael* #1, *Batman* #497, *Daredevil* #319, *Vengeance of Bane* #1, *Prime* #2, *Bloodshot* #7, *Shadowman* #16, *Ren & Stimpy* #1, *Superman* #82.

December

Superman #82 and *Green Lantern* #46 were at top of the heap, and pretty much still are. We reported that Batman values had leveled, but predicted that the new animated Batman movie could change things. We advised readers to watch *Sandman* #51 as a possible hot issue.

Daredevil #319 and the *Daredevil: Man Without Fear* series by Frank Miller were severely underordered by retailers. Prices rose accordingly, and are still on the move at the time of this writing. The renewed interest in *Daredevil* and Frank Miller stirred movement in *Daredevil* #158-#181. *Ren & Stimpy* continued to be a hot topic among collectors, with demand still outstripping supply in most areas of the country. We reported on the effect that the *X-Men* Saturday morning cartoon was having on sales of *X-Men Animated Series* comics and other *X-Men* back issues. Collectors of *Amazing Spider-Man* #300 are enjoying watching the value of this first major appearance of Venom rise; it's still selling well in the $65 to $70 range.

Spawn is the hottest comic among the independent comics publishers, according to many of the collectors and retailers we surveyed. No major price adjustments occurred, however, as we waited to see the effect the Wal-Mart packs would have on the market.

At Valiant, *Bloodshot* #6 was still selling well, partly due to anticipation of the new *Ninjak* series. Most other Valiant prices were in a holding pattern. The hard-to-find pre-Unity issues were still in demand by collectors, but the current prices were keeping some people from jumping in.

Bone by Jeff Smith began getting the attention it deserves. First printings of the first few issues are extremely hard to find. This was the pick of the month for November. Great entertainment, great investment potential—what more could you ask for?

Cerebus, anyone? Nearly every retailer in our independent survey reported an increase in demand for early *Cerebus* issues. There was almost no secondary market supply for the first twenty issues, due to their low print runs in the early years. Prices began to inch upward.

In the Silver Age DC market, advanced Silver Age DC collectors were thrilled to see our new listings of classic DC war titles. *All-American Men at War*, *G.I. Combat*, and others were added to the price guide this month. Here at *Wizard* Price Guide Central, we began adding other important titles for advanced collectors, titles such as *Challengers of the Unknown*, *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane*, *Sea Devils*, *Mystery in Space*, and many others. Keep watchin'!

In Marvel Silver Age issues, there continues to be strong demand for high-grade key issues. There is an emerging need for many collectors to take a look at mid-grade copies, such as VG (Very Good) or VGF (Very Good to Fine) issues, to make Silver Age collecting affordable. Only the very rich can afford Near Mint copies of most Silver Age classics like *Incredible Hulk* #1, *Fantastic Four* #1, *Amazing Spider-Man* #1, and *Amazing Fantasy* #15. However, low-grade, slightly dog-eared copies of these same copies can be found for less than the price of a used car...hmmm.

We reported the increasingly strong demand for TV tie-in comics from the 1960s and '70s, such as *Star Trek* by Gold Key. With the *Beverly Hillbillies* movie out, there should be some strong collector interest here, and in classic television comics in general.

The toy market continues to be a hot market, so we suggested that collectors take a look at 1960s issues of *Barbie & Ken*, and any other toy tie-in comics.

Peering into 1994

Wizard is where the action will be for certain in '94! It's too early to let the cat out of the bag yet, but here's a hint: *It's big and full of prices!* So many projects are in the works that you just won't believe it. And all of it pertains to keeping you, the collector, on top of every aspect of the comic book market. From the latest and greatest hot new releases to the golden oldies of the past, the *Wizard* price guide will be the best of all worlds in 1994! ☆

ATTENTION RETAILERS

Our price guide database has been revamped to significantly expand dealer input and speed compiling. Participating dealers who complete our monthly survey forms (perhaps 15 minutes of your time) will receive a copy of our new, participants-only newsletter, *Entertainment Retailing*. This publication, created for all entertainment retailers in today's diversified marketplace, features information designed to help retailers maximize their store's potential. Each month, you'll find pricing info to be featured in the next issue of *Wizard*, and up-to-date industry news, plus profiles of successful retailers. Thank you to those who have already responded. To participate, write or fax, on letterhead, to DEALER NEWSLETTER, Wizard Press, P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001. Fax: 914-426-6071.

December 1, 1993-January 15, 1994

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

***Wizard* is not responsible for missing or false show information.**

ALABAMA

DEC 12, BIRMINGHAM, Holiday Inn (airport exit off I-20), A:$1, 10am-4pm, 205-854-5791

ARKANSAS

DEC 4, JONESBORRO, Comic & Card Show, Park Inn, 1421 Caraway Rd., T:35 A:$2, 9am-6pm, 501-794-3394

CALIFORNIA

DEC 1, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 5-10pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 1, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 2, ONTARIO, Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Sportscard Emporium, 1909 S. Vineyard Ave., T:50 A:Free, 5-9:30pm, 909-930-1424

DEC 3-5, SAN JOSE, Meridian Card & Comic Expo, 1712 Meridian Ave., T:20 A:Free, Fri:5-9pm, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 408-267-0927

DEC 4, N. HOLLYWOOD, Valley Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Beverly Garland Hotel, 4222 Vineland Ave., T:40 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 818-247-9775

DEC 4, SAN LUIS OBISPO, Comic, Baseball & Collectible Show, Cal Poly Univ. #220 Grand & Perimeter Rd., T:25 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 805-547-1741

DEC 4, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 4-5, ONTARIO, Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Sportscard Emporium, 1909 S. Vineyard Ave., T:50 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-930-1424

DEC 4-5, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 5, CONCORD, Hot Shot Sports Cards & Comic Book Expo, Concord Sheraton, 45 John Glenn Dr. (Concord Avenue Exit on I-680), T:35 A:$2, 9:30am-4:30pm

DEC 5, STOCKTON, Comic & Collectable Show, Scottish Rite Temple, 33 W. Alpine Ave., T:40 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 916-452-3237

DEC 5, STOCKTON, Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Stockton Inn, Joanquin Room, Hwy. 99 & Waterloo Rd., T:36 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 209-948-0976

DEC 6, FRESNO, Comic & Card Show, Picadilly Inn Unv., 4961 N. Cedar, T:24 A:$1, 5pm-9pm, 209-292-2890

DEC 8, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave, T:40 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 8, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 9, ONTARIO, Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Sportscard Emporium, 1909 S. Vineyard Ave., T:50 A:Free, 5-9:30pm, 909-930-1424

DEC 9, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 5-10pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 10, SAN DIEGO, Comic Book & Card Show, Scottish Rite Ctr., 1895 Camino Del Rio S., T:45 A:$1.50, 5-9:30pm, 619-669-1759

DEC 10-11, LA JOLLA, UTC Comic & Sports Card Show, 4545 La Jolla Village Dr., Canyon Room, T:45 A:$1, Fri:5-9:30pm, Sat:10am-4pm, 619-989-0612

DEC 10-12, SAN JOSE, Meridian Card & Comic Expo, 1712 Meridian Ave., T:20 A:Free, Fri:5-9pm, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 408-267-0927

DEC 11, PASADENA, Pasadena Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Pasadena Ctr., 300 E. Green St., T:35 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 818-247-9775

DEC 11, LODI, Card & Comic Show, Lodi Grape Festival Grounds, 413 E. Lockeford St., T:25 A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 209-368-7345

DEC 11, LOS ANGELES, Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Alpine Recreation Ctr., 817 Yale St., A:Free, 10am-5pm, 213-485-5448

DEC 11, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 11-12, ONTARIO, Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Sportscard Emporium, 1909 S. Vineyard Ave., T:50 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-930-1424

DEC 11-12, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 12, BURBANK, King Kon, 2500 Hollywood Way, T:75 A:$3-$5, 10am-5pm, 818-994-5254

DEC 12, MODESTO, Baseball & Comic Show, Steps & Variations, 1300 N. 9th Street, T:22 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 209-948-0976

DEC 12, ONTARIO, Inland Empire Comic Book Convention, Red Lion Hotel, 222 N. Vineyard, T:40 A:$3.50, 818-335-2410

DEC 12, SAN DIEGO, Greatest Mini-Con, Scottish Rite Center-Mission Valley, 1895 Camino Del Rio S., A:$2.50, 619-273-7048

DEC 12, SAN DIEGO, Mira Mesa Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, 9335 Kearney Mesa Rd., T:30 A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 619-669-1759

DEC 15, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 5-10pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 15, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 16, ONTARIO, Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Sportscard Emporium, 1909 S. Vineyard Ave., T:50 A:Free, 5-9:30pm, 909-930-1424

DEC 17, SAN DIEGO, Comic Book & Card Show, La Mesa Womens Club, T:31 A:$1.50, 4:30-9pm, 619-669-1759

DEC 17-19, SAN JOSE, Meridian Card & Comic Expo, 1712 Meridian Ave., T:20 A:Free, Fri:5-9pm, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 408-267-0927

DEC 18, N. HOLLYWOOD, Valley Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Beverly Garland Hotel, 4222 Vineland Ave., T:40 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 818-247-9775

DEC 18, SAN DIEGO, Southern California Comic Book & Card Expo, Del Mar Fairgrounds, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd., T:60 A:$2, 10am-5pm, 619-669-1759

DEC 18, SAN FRANCISCO, SF Comic Book & Card Show, Cathedral Hill Hotel, 1101 Van Ness Ave. & Geary Blvd., T:50 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 415-386-9036

DEC 18-19, ONTARIO, Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Sportscard Emporium, 1909 S. Vineyard Ave., T:50 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-930-1424

DEC 18-19, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 18-19, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, Sat:10am-5pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 19, BUENA PARK, Orange County Comic, Non-Sport Card & Collectible Show, Sequoia Athletic Club, 7530 Orangethorpe Ave., T:80 A:$3, 10am-4pm, 818-913-4046

DEC 19, GLENDALE, S. California Comic Book, Sport Card & Collectible Convention, Glendale Civic Auditorium, 1401 N. Verdugo Rd., T:50 A:$2.50, 10am-4pm, 818-842-1861

DEC 22, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 5-10pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 22, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 23, ONTARIO, Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Sportscard Emporium, 1909 S. Vineyard Ave., T:50 A:Free, 5-9:30pm, 909-930-1424

DEC 22-24, SAN JOSE, Meridian Card & Comic Expo, 1712 Meridian Ave., T:20 A:Free, Wed:4:30-9:30pm, Thu:4:30-9:30pm, Fri:9:30am-4pm, 408-267-0927

DEC 26, ONTARIO, Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Sportscard Emporium, 1909 S. Vineyard Ave., T:50 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-930-1424

DEC 26, SAN FRANCISCO, San Franciscon #10, Holiday Inn—Golden Gateway, 1500 Van Ness Ave., T:45 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 415-386-9036

DEC 26, SAN JOSE, Meridian Card & Comic Expo, 1712 Meridian Ave., T:20 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 408-267-0927

DEC 26, SAN JOSE, San Jose Comic Book & Card Show, Le Baron Hotel, 1350 N. First St., T:40 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 415-386-9036

DEC 27, DEC 11, PASADENA, Pasadena Monday Marathon Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Pasadena Ctr., 300 E. Green St., T:35 A:Free, noon-9pm, 818-247-9775

DEC 29, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 5-10pm, 909-780-4555

DEC 29, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

DEC 30, ONTARIO, Cards, Comics & Collectibles Show, Sportscard Emporium, 1909 S. Vineyard Ave., T:50 A:Free, 5-9:30pm, 909-930-1424

DEC 31, SAN JOSE, Meridian Card & Comic Expo, 1712 Meridian Ave., T:20 A:Free, 4-9pm, 408-267-0927

JAN 1-2, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

JAN 5, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 5-10pm, 909-780-4555

JAN 5, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

JAN 8, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

JAN 8-9, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

JAN 12, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 5-10pm, 909-780-4555

JAN 12, WALNUT, Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, 909-594-7492

JAN 15-16, RIVERSIDE, The Main Event, 12321 Sampson Ave., Unit R, T:40 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-780-4555

JAN 15, WALNUT, Cards, Comics & Collectibles, Frank & Son Warehouse, 19465 E. Walnut Dr. N., T:150

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

A:Free, 10am-5pm, 909-594-7492

CANADA

DEC 4-5, TORONTO, Fall Comic Expo '93, Internat'l Ctr., 6900 Airport Rd. (across from airport), T:175 A:$7, 11am-6pm, 416-244-5156
DEC 5, MONTREAL, Comicfest, Delta Montreal Hotel, 475 President Kennedy Ave., T:85 A:$4, 10am-5pm, 514-482-7913

COLORADO

DEC 5, DENVER, Denver Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, I-70 at Chambers Rd., A:$3, 10am-4pm, 908-788-6845

CONNECTICUT

DEC 4, WATERBURY, Central Connecticut Sportscard & Comic Show, Ramada Inn (formerly the Red Bull Inn), I-84 (Exit 25), T:40 A:$2, 9am-3pm, 203-231-3305
DEC 10, NEW HAVEN, Comic Book & Baseball Card Show, Knights of Columbus Hall, 263 Center St., T:40 A:$.99, 6-10pm, 203-934-0219
DEC 12, MILFORD, Baseball & Comic Show, Knights of Columbus, 625 Bridgeport Ave., T:60 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 203-874-3545
DEC 18, WATERBURY, SSPP School Card & Comic Show, Sts. Peter & Paul School Gym, Beecher Ave., T:50 A:$1, 9:30am-3:30pm, 203-755-4190
DEC 19, NORTH HAVEN, Central Connecticut Sportscard & Comic Show, Holiday Inn—North Haven, I-84 (Exit 25), T:40 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 203-231-3305
DEC 26, WATERBURY, Central Connecticut Sportscard & Comic Show, Ramada Inn (formerly the Red Bull Inn), I-84 (Exit 25), T:40 A:$2, 9am-3pm, 203-231-3305
JAN 2, STRATFORD, Connecticut's Premier Card & Comic Show, Ramada Inn, I-95 Exit 30, T:55 A:$3, 9:30am-4pm, 203-377-9567
JAN 9, DANBURY, Comic Show, Danbury Hilton Towers, 18 Old Ridgebury Rd. (Exit 2 off I-84), T:57 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 203-746-7531

FLORIDA

DEC 4, GAINESVILLE, Jubilee Enterprises, Holiday Inn (West), 7415 N.W. 8th Ave., A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587
DEC 4-5, FT.LAUDERDALE, Sports & Comic Collectibles, Coral Ridge Mall, 3200 N. Federal Hwy., T:50 A:Free, Sat:10am-7pm Sun:11am-5pm, 305-386-4099
DEC 4-5, ORLANDO, Orlando Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Central Florida Fairgrounds, Bldg. A, 4603 W. COlonial Dr., T:60 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 813-686-9043
DEC 5, N. FT. MYERS, Best Western, 13021 N. Cleveland Ave., T:25 A:Free, 9am-5pm, 813-772-0254
DEC 5, JACKSON, Jubilee Convention, Holiday Inn, 9150 Bay Meadows Rd., T:35 A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587
DEC 11-12, CORAL GABLES, Sportscard & Comic Show, Miracle Ctr., 3301 Coral Way, T:33 A:Free, Sat:10am-8pm, Sun:11am-8pm, 305-386-4099
DEC 11-12, LAKELAND, Lakeland Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Lakeland Mall, 1108 E. Memorial Blvd., T:50 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 813-686-9043
DEC 12, ORLANDO, Christmas Comic Book Mega-Show, Holiday Inn, 6515 Internat'l Dr., T:95 A:$2.50, 10am-5pm, 407-426-7745
DEC 12, PUNTA GORDA, Memorial Auditorium and Civic Ctr., 75 Taylor St., T:35 A:Free, 9am-5pm, 813-574-7731
DEC 18-23, CLEARWATER, Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Sunshine Mall, corner of Missouri & Druid, T:65 A:Free, mall hours, 407-846-3429
DEC 19, FT. MYERS, Ramada Hotel—Airport, 12635 Cleveland Ave., T:35 A:Free, 9am-5pm, 813-574-7731
DEC 26-30, ST. PETERSBURG, Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Gateway Mall, 7885 9th St. N., T:75 A:Free, mall hours, 407-846-3429

GEORGIA

DEC 3-5, LILBURN, Lilburn Crossing Shopping Center, 4230 Hwy. 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:4-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
DEC 5, ATLANTA, Atlanta Comic Book Convention, Radisson Hotel, Courtland and International Blvd., A:$3.25, 10am-4pm, 908-788-6845
DEC 10-12, LILBURN, 4230 Hwy 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:4pm-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
DEC 11-12, ATLANTA, Legends Collectors Show, Vantage Hotel, 2180 Nortlake Pkwy., T:20, Sat-Sun:10am-6pm, 706-234-8210
DEC 10-12, LILBURN, Lilburn Crossing Shopping Center, 4230 Hwy. 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:4-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
DEC 17-19, LILBURN, Lilburn Crossing Shopping Center, 4230 Hwy. 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:4pm-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
DEC 24 & 26, LILBURN, Lilburn Crossing Shopping Center, 4230 Hwy. 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:10am-6pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
DEC 31-JAN 2, LILBURN, Lilburn Crossing Shopping Center, 4230 Hwy. 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:11am-6pm, Sat:noon-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
JAN 7-9, LILBURN, Lilburn Crossing Shopping Center, 4230 Hwy. 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:4pm-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557
JAN 14-16, LILBURN, Lilburn Crossing Shopping Center, 4230 Hwy. 29, T:20 A:$1, Fri:4pm-9pm, Sat:10am-7pm, Sun:11am-6pm, 404-923-5557

ILLINOIS

DEC 3, CHICAGO, Sport, Non-Sport & Comic Book Show, St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, 6501 W. Belmont, T:20 A:$1, 5-9pm, 312-622-5433
DEC 4, GLEN ELLYN, Extra Innings Sport Cards & Comic Book Show, Glen Ellyn Holiday Inn, 1250 Roosevelt Rd., T:33 A:Free, 9am-2:30pm, 708-960-4700
DEC 4, OAKBROOK, Sportsnews, Card & Comic Show, 1401 W. 22nd St., T:75 A:$1, 9:30am-3:30pm, 708-663-1975
DEC 5, WILLOWBROOK, Extra Innings Sport Cards & Comic Book Show, WIllowbrook Holiday Inn, 7800 Kingery Hwy., T:45 A:Free, 9am-2:30pm, 708-960-4700
DEC 11, HILLSIDE, Extra Innings Sport Cards & Comic Book Show, Hillside Holiday Inn, 4400 Frontage Rd., T:72 A:$1, 9am-2:30pm, 708-960-4700
DEC 12, CRYSTAL LAKE, Sports Card, Comic Book, and Train Show, Holiday Inn, Rte. 31 and Three Oaks Rd., T:45 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-309-8204
DEC 12, ORLAND PARK, Comics & Card Show, Orland Park Civic Ctr., one block west of LaGrange Rd. at 147th St., T:60 A:$1, 9am-5pm, 708-423-1758
DEC 12, ROSEMONT, Sportsnews, Card & Comic Show, Rosemont Horizon, Skyline Room, 6920 N. Mannheim (on Lunt), T:150 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 708-663-1975
DEC 12, SKOKIE, Niles Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, 5300 W. Towhy Ave., T:40 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-518-8177
DEC 18, WOODFIELD, Woodfield Hyatt Regency, 1800 E. Golf Rd., T:50 A:Free, 9am-4pm, 708-893-9555
DEC 19, BERWYN, Extra Innings Sport Cards & Comic Book Show, Sokol Berwyn, 6445 W. 27th Pl., T:30 A:Free, 9:30am-2:30pm, 708-960-4700
DEC 19, BLOOMINGDALE, Silver Reef Card & Comic Show, Indian Lakes Country Club, 250 W. Schick Rd., T:80 A:$1, 9:30am-4pm, 708-351-1799
DEC 19, CHICAGO, Ford City Holiday Inn, 7535 S. Cicero Ave., T:40 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 312-666-9500
DEC 19, CRYSTAL LAKE, Sports Card, Comic Book, and Train Show, Holiday Inn, Rte. 31 and Three Oaks Rd., T:45 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-309-8204
DEC 19, OAKBROOK, Sportsnews, Card & Comic Show, 1401 W. 22nd St., T:75 A:$1, 9:30am-3:30pm, 708-663-1975
DEC 19, YORKVILLE, Yorkville Card & Comic Show, Beecher Bldg., 908 Game Farm Rd., T:30 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 708-553-7157
DEC 26, CRYSTAL LAKE, Sports Card, Comic Book, and Train Show, Holiday Inn, Rte. 31 and Three Oaks Rd., T:45 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-309-8204
DEC 26, HILLSIDE, Extra Innings Sport Cards & Comic Book Show, Hillside Holiday Inn, 4400 Frontage Rd., T:72 A:$1, 9am-2:30pm, 708-960-4700
DEC 26, CHICAGO, Ford City Holiday Inn, 7535 S. Cicero Ave., T:40 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 312-666-9500
DEC 26, ROSEMONT, Sportsnews, Card & Comic Show, Rosemont Horizon, Skyline Room, 6920 N. Mannheim (on Lunt), T:150 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 708-663-1975
JAN 9, YORKVILLE, Yorkville Card & Comic Show, Beecher Bldg., 908 Game Farm Rd., T:30 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 708-553-7157
JAN 15, E. PEORIA, Central Illinois Comic Con, 401 N. Main (Exit 95A on I-74), T:60 A:Free, 10am-4pm, 309-688-2553

INDIANA

DEC 4, MICHIGAN CITY, Comic Book & Sports Card Show, American Legion—Franklin Miller Post #37, 756 E. US Hwy. 20, T:40 A:Free, 10am-3pm, 219-659-4947
DEC 5, HAMMOND, American Inn, 4000 Calumet Ave. (Exit 5 off I-90), T:40 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 219-659-4947
DEC 5, MARTINSVILLE, Premier Collectibles Show, Morgan County 4-H Bldg. (west off Hwy. 37 & 252 intersection), T:25 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 317-631-7009
DEC 11, HAMMOND, Card & Comic Show, F.O.P. #57, 7527 Kennedy Ave., T:28 A:$1, 9:30am-2:30pm, 219-865-1563
DEC 11, HAMMOND, Quality Inn, 3830 179th St. (Exit 5A off I-94), T:25 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 219-659-4947
DEC 12, MARTINSVILLE, Premier Collectibles Show, Morgan County 4-H Bldg. (west off Hwy. 37 & 252 intersection), T:25 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 317-631-7009
DEC 18, BLOOMINGTON, Premier Collectibles Show, University Inn, 2601 N. Walnut, T:25 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 317-631-7009
DEC 19, PORTAGE, Days Inn 6161 Melton Rd. (Exit 19 off I-94), T:30 A:$1, 10am-3pm, 219-659-4947
DEC 19, MUNCIE, Dave's Comic & Book Show, Holiday Inn, 3200 S. Madison St., T:24 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 317-288-0002
DEC 19, TERRE HAUTE, Premier Collectibles Show, Days Inn (Exit 7 off I-70), T:25 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 317-631-7009
DEC 26, INDIANAPOLIS, Indianapolis Animation, Toy, and Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn East, 6990 E. 21st St., T:90 A:$3, 10:30am-4:30pm, 317-824-9602
JAN 15, HAMMOND, Calumet Region Card & Comic Show, 7527 Hammond FOP #5 (I-80 & Kennedy N. Exit), T:28 A:$1, 9:30am-2:30pm, 219-865-1563

IOWA

DEC 4, PELLA, Sports Card & Comic Show, Broadway St., T:30 A:Free, 9am-5pm, 516-628-3797
DEC 12, DAVENPORT, B&L Sports Cards & Comics, East Davenport Turner Hall, 2113 E. 11th St., T:26 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 309-786-8097
DEC 19, DAVENPORT, B&L Sports Cards & Comics, East Davenport Turner Hall, 2113 E. 11th St., T:60 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 309-786-8097

KENTUCKY

DEC 11, BOWLING GREEN, Comics, Cards, Collectibles Show, Greenwood Executive Inn, I-65 Exit 22, T:40 A:Free, 9am-4:30pm, 502-842-6492
DEC 11-12, LOUISVILLE, Panther Comic Show, Pleasure Ridge Park High School, 5901 Greenwood Rd., T:50 A:$1, Sat:9am-6pm, Sun: 11am-5pm, 502-473-8311
JAN 8, BOWLING GREEN, Comics, Cards, Collectibles Show, Greenwood Executive Inn, I-65 Exit 22, T:40 A:Free, 9am-4:30pm, 502-842-6492

LOUISIANA

DEC 4, KENNER, Family Baseball Card & Comic Show, Radisson Hotel, 2150 Veterans Blvd., T:32 A:Free, 10am-5pm, 504-469-5985
DEC 12, BATON ROUGE, Baseball & Comic Show, Holiday Inn S., I-12 Airline Hwy., T:43 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 504-654-6228

MARYLAND

DEC 5, HUNT VALLEY, Clandestine Comic Show, Embassy Suites Hotel, 213 Internat'l Cir., A:$1, 11am-4pm, 410-252-4324

MASSACHUSETTS

DEC 4, PEABODY, Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, T:40 A:$3, 10am-4pm, 203-331-4345
DEC 5, LOWELL, Lowell Boys Club Swim Team Comic Book & Baseball Card Show, 657 Middlesex St., A:$1, 10am-4pm, 508-459-4707
DEC 5, WOBURN, Howard Johnson Convention Facility, Montvale Ave. (Exit 36 off Rte. 93), T:100 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 508-485-6500

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SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

JAN 8, LAWRENCE, Monthly Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Quality Inn, Rte. 114 (across from N. Andover Mall), T:32 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 508-685-2049
JAN 8, WORCESTOR, Comic Book & Trading Card Show, Howard Inn Hotel & Meeting Ctr. (Exit 11 off Rte. 290 next to Holy Cross), T:40 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 508-753-0977
JAN 9, WOBURN, Howard Johnson Convention Facility, Montvale Ave. (Exit 36 off Rte. 93), T:100 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 508-485-6500

MICHIGAN

DEC 4, GRAND HAVEN, Card & Comic Show, 1400 S. Griffin, T:25 A:$.50, 9:30am-4pm, 616-846-7027
DEC 5, E. LANSING, Spartan Comic Book Show, Kellogg Ctr., Michigan State Univ., Big Ten Rm. A, A:$1, 10am-4pm, 313-350-2633
DEC 6, STERLING HEIGHTS, Sportscard & Comic Show, Freedom Hill, E. of Schoehnerr, T:40 A:Free, 3pm-9pm, 313-792-9461
DEC 12, ANN ARBOR, Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn West, 2900 Jackson Rd., A:$2, 10am-4pm, 215-966-0199
DEC 12, ROYAL OAK, Encore-Con Comic Show, American Legion Hall, 1815 Rochester Rd., A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 313-350-2633
DEC 13, STERLING HEIGHTS, Sportscard & Comic Show, Freedom Hill, E. of Schoehnerr, T:40 A:Free, 3pm-9pm, 313-792-9461
DEC 26, LIVONIA, X-Trava Con Comic Book Show, Knights of Columbus Hall, 19801 Farmington Rd., A:$1.50, 10am-4:pm, 313-350-2633

MISSISSIPPI

DEC 11-12, JACKSON, Comic & Card Autograph Show, Mississippi State Fairgrounds, A&I Bldg., T:50 A:$2, 9am-6pm, 601-329-4844

MISSOURI

DEC 4, WEST PLAINS, TNT Comic & Card Show, The Way Station Motel & Restaurant, corner of Hwy. 60 & 63, T:30 A:Free, 8am-5pm, 417-932-6600
DEC 5, INDEPENDENCE, Comic & Card Show, Howard Johnson at corners of I-70 & Nolan Rd., T:25 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 816-761-6666
DEC 5, ST. LOUIS, St. Louis Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, I-70 (Lindbergh Exit), A:$3, 10am-4pm, 908-788-6845
DEC 11, SPRINGFIELD, Comic & Sportscard Show, Markham Inn, 2820 N. Glenstone, T:30 A:$1, 9am-4pm, 417-889-2529
DEC 12, KANSAS CITY, Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn Longview Rd. & S. 71 Hwy., T:20 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 816-761-6666
DEC 19, ST. CHARLES, Sports Card & Comic Show, Stegton Regency, 1450 Wall St. (by Hawks Nest & S. Outer Rd.), T:45 A:$1, 9am-3pm, 314-388-5288

MISSISSIPPI

DEC 11, NATCHEZ, Comic & Card Show, Ramada Hilltop Motel, T:10 A:$1, 6pm-10pm, 601-442-6425

NEW JERSEY

DEC 2, WOODBRIDGE, Comic & Card Show, Forge Inn, Rte. 9 N., T:30 A:Free, 5pm-10pm, 908-422-9365
DEC 4, UNION, Collectors Showcase, Union Boys & Girls Club, 1050 Jeanette Ave., T:45 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 908-874-4837
DEC 4, CARTERET, Comic, Sports & Non-Sports Show, St. Demetrius Convention Ctr., A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-855-5852
DEC 5, BORDENTOWN, Four Color Comic Art Convention, Days Inn, Rte. 206 N. (Exit 7 off NJ Turnpke.), T:30 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-828-5955
DEC 5, HAZLET Collectors Showcase Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, Rte. 35, T:50 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 908-291-1632
DEC 5, LINDEN, Gigantic Card, Comic & Collectible Show, Congregation Anshe Chesed, George Ave & Orchard Terr., T:50 A:$2, 10am-4:30pm, 908-925-8220
DEC 5, LIVINGSTON, Sports Card & Comic Show, Livingston Holiday Inn, T:45 A:Free, 9:30am-4pm, 201-533-0325
DEC 5, LITTLE FERRY, Card & Comic Show, VFW Post 809, 100 Main St.,T:30 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 201-438-2530
DEC 7, HAZLET, Hazlet Tuesday Night Monthly Comic and Sport Card Show, Shore Point Inn, Rte. 35 S. (Exit 117 on Garden State Pkwy.), T:15 A:$1, 5-9:30pm, 908-583-7915
DEC 7, MONTVALE, Card & Comic Show, Ramada Inn, 100 Chestnut Ridge Rd., T:35 A:$2, 5pm-10pm, 201-342-8980
DEC 9, WOODBRIDGE, Woodbridge Monthly Thursday Night Non-Sport, Sports Cards and Comic Book Show, Budget Motor Lodge, Rte. 9 N., T:30 A:$1, 5-9:30pm, 908-583-7915
DEC 10, EDISON, Sportscard & Comic Show, Middlesex County College, 155 Mill Rd. (Cafe A&B), T:70 A:$2, 5pm-10pm, 908-826-8039
DEC 11, S. PLAINFIELD, Monthly Card & Comic Show, 910 Oak Tree Rd., T:40 A:Free, 10am-6pm, 908-757-8827
DEC 12, BRICKTOWN, Baseball Card & Comic Book, Temple Beth Or, 200 Van Zile Rd., T:80 A:$5, 10am-4pm, 908-308-0384
DEC 12, COLTS NECK, Monthly Card & Comic Show, Fire House #2, Conover Rd. (off Rte. 34), T:50 A:Free, 9am-4pm, 908-9466-9260
DEC 12, EDISON, SAI Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Clarion Hotel & Towers, 2055 Lincoln Hwy. (Rte. 27), T:30 A:$1.50, 9:30am-4:30pm, 609-655-7668
DEC 12, NEW MILFORD, Card & Comic Show, VFW Post 4290, 267 Madison Ave., T:22 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 201-438-2530
DEC 12, ROBBINSVILLE, Central New Jersey Comic Book & Trading Card Show, Washington Twnshp. Volunteer Fire Dep't., Rte. 130, A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 609-448-7585
DEC 12, TINTON FALLS, Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, Pkwy. Exit 105, T:35 A:$2, 9:30am-4:30pm, 908-531-9281
DEC 12, TOMS RIVER, Collectors Comic Show, Elks Post #1875, Washington & Clifton Ave., T:50 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 908-291-1632
DEC 16, EAST BRUNSWICK, Mid-State Monthly Thursday Night Sports Card and Comic Show, Mid-State Bowl, Mid-State Mall, Rte. 18 N., T:20 A:$1, 5-9:30pm, 908-531-9281
DEC 18, CLARK, The New Clark Spectacular, Ramada Inn, New Jersey Pkwy. Exit 135, T:30 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-422-9365
DEC 18, FLEMINGTON, Elks Lodge #1928, Rte. 31 (across from fairgrounds), T:39 A:Free, 10am-4pm, 908-479-6603
DEC 18, HILLSBOROUGH, World of Cards & Comics Convention, Hillsborough Fire Co. #2, 375 Rte. 206, T:50 A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 908-968-3886
DEC 18-19, CHERRY HILL, Nat'l Guard Armory, Grove St., A:Free, Sat:10am-5pm, Sun:10am-4pm, 215-968-8577
DEC 19, HOWELL, Baseball Card & Comic Book, Great American Flea Market Mezzanine, 2301 Hwy. 9N, T:130 A:$5, 10am-5pm, 908-308-0384
DEC 19, MT. LAUREL, Mt. Laurel Comic Book Convention, Rte. 73 and Fellowship Rd. (Exit 4 off New Jersey Turnpike), A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-788-6845
DEC 19, WESTFIELD, DJL Presents Spectacular Card, Comics & Collectibles Show, Temple Emanu-El, 756 E. Broad St., T:50 A:$2, 10am-4:30pm, 908-925-8220
DEC 20, EDISON, Monday Night Spectacular Christmas Show, Congregation Beth El, Rte. 1 to Plainfield Ave. then first left, T:30 A:$1, 5pm-9:30pm, 908-422-9365
DEC 26, ROBBINSVILLE, Central New Jersey Comic Book & Trading Card Show, Washington Twnshp. Volunteer Fire Dep't., Rte. 130, T:45 A:$2, 9:30am-3:30pm, 609-448-7585
DEC 26, TOMS RIVER, Baseball Card & Comic Show, E. Dover Fire Co., Fischer Blvd., T:50 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 908-929-4630
DEC 29, WOODBRIDGE, Woodbridge Special Wednesday Night Sports Card and Comic Book Show, Budget Motor Lodge, Rte. 9 N., T:30 A:$1, 5-9:30pm, 908-531-9281
JAN 1, EAST BRUNSWICK, Mid-State Special New Year's Bash, Mid-State Bowl, Mid-State Mall, Rte. 18 N., T:20 A:$2, 1-7pm, 908-531-9281
JAN 8-9, S. PLAINFIELD, World of Cards & Comics Convention, Middlesex Mall, Corner of Hadley Rd. & Stelton Rd., T:83 A:Free, Sat:10am-9:30pm, Sun:11am-5pm, 908-968-3886
JAN 9, COLTS NECK, Monthly Card & Comic Show, Fire House #2, Conover Rd. (off Rte. 34), T:50 A:Free, 9am-4pm, 908-9466-9260
JAN 9, LIVINGSTON, Sports Card & Comic Show, Livingston Holiday Inn, T:45 A:Free, 9:30am-4pm, 201-533-0325
JAN 15, HILLSBOROUGH, World of Cards & Comics Convention, Hillsborough Fire Co. #2, 375 Rte. 206, T:50 A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, 908-968-3886

NEW YORK

DEC 3, BROOKLYN, Big Friday Nite Show, Knights of Columbus Hall, Bayridge Ave. (69th St.) & 10th Ave., T:45 A:$1, 6-10pm, 718-545-9544
DEC 4, BRENTWOOD, Brentwood Country Club, 100 Pennsylvnia Ave., T:35, A:$1, 10am-5pm, 718-331-5209
DEC 4, FLORAL PARK, Comic & Sportscard Show, St. Hedwig Parish Hall, 309 Jericho Tpk., T:40 A:$1, 9:30am-4pm, 516-248-4235
DEC 4, HEMPSTEAD, Long Island Sports & Comic Convention, Hofstra University Student Ctr., T:120 A:$3, 10am-5pm, 516-752-7557
DEC 5, BAYSIDE, Bayside Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Holy Cross High School, 26-20 Francis Lewis Blvd., T:50 A:$1, 9:30am-4:30pm, 718-886-0213
DEC 5, HICKSVILLE, Hicksville Monthly, Jerusalem Ave. & Maglie Dr., T:32 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-799-6412
DEC 5, STONY BROOK, Baseball & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 3131 Nesconset Hwy., T:20+ A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-689-8138
DEC 7, QUEENS, Big Tuesday Nite Show, Cretan House, 32-33 31st St. (off Broadway in Astoria), T:50 A:$2, 718-545-9544
DEC 9, DEER PARK, Baseball & Comic Show, Sons of Italy—Constantino Brumidi Lodge, 2075 Deer Park Ave., A:Free, 6pm-10pm, 516-289-7398
DEC 10, BROOKLYN, Big Friday Nite Show, Knights of Columbus Hall, Bayridge Ave. (69th St.) & 10th Ave., T:45 A:$1, 6-10pm, 718-545-9544
DEC 10, BROOKLYN, Brooklyn's Friday Nite Card & Comic Show, Our Lady of Grace, 430 Ave. W at E. 2nd St., T:50 A:Free, 6pm-11pm, 718-251-2075
DEC 11, FLORAL PARK, Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Masonic Hall, corner of Tulip and Carnation Aves. (across from post office), T:20 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-795-4628
DEC 11, HAUPPAUGE, Baseball & Comic Show, Marriott Grand Ball Rm., 1717 Motor Pkwy., T:40 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-689-8138
DEC 11, NEW YORK CITY, Intergalactic Gatherings of Comic Books & Collectibles, Omni Park Central Hotel, 870 7th Ave., (between 55th & 56th Sts.), T:60 A:$1, 9am-6pm, 212-581-4884
DEC 11-12, BROOKLYN, Pratt Area Card & Comic Show, St. Luke's Parish Hall, 259 Washington Ave. (between. DeKalb &Willoughby), A:Free, 10am-5pm, 718-783-6837
DEC 12, BELLEROSE, Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall, 242-37 Braddock Ave., T:25 A:$1, 516-795-4628
DEC 12, BROOKLYN, Xaverian High School, 7100 Shore Rd., T:35 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 718-331-5209
DEC 12, ROCKVILLE CENTRE, Baseball & Comic Show, Holiday Inn, 173 Sunrise Hwy., A:Free, 10am-5pm, 516-678-1300
DEC 12, WILLISTON PARK, Monthly Card & Comic Show, American Legion Post #144 (lower level), 730 Willis Ave., A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-289-7398
DEC 14, QUEENS, Big Tuesday Nite Show, Cretan House, 32-33 31st St. (off Broadway in Astoria), T:50 A:$2, 718-545-9544
DEC 17, BROOKLYN, Big Friday Nite Show, Knights of Columbus Hall, Bayridge Ave. (69th St.) & 10th Ave., T:45 A:$1, 6-10pm, 718-545-9544
DEC 17, STONY BROOK, Holiday Inn Express, Baseball Card & Comic Show, 3131 Nesconset Hwy. (Rte. 347), T:20 A:$1, 6pm-10pm, 516-689-8138
DEC 18, BEDFORD, Class of '96 Card & Comic Show, Rte. 172 (Exit 4 off I-684), T:40 A:$2, 9am-5pm, 914-242-7312
DEC 18, LYNBROOK, Monthly Baseball Card & Comic Book Show, St. Mary's Knights of Columbus Hall, 78 Hempstead Ave. (.25 miles N. of Merrick Rd.), A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-289-7398
DEC 18, OCEANSIDE, Card & Comic Show, Sons of Italy—Rocky Marciano Lodge, 3015 Long Beach Rd., A:Free, 6-10pm, 516-289-7398
DEC 18-19, UNIONDALE, Long Island Card & Comic Expo, Nassau Coliseum, T:250 A:$6, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-5pm, 516-679-3143
DEC 19, CEDARHURST, HAFTR High School, 635 Central Ave., T:30 A:$1, 9am-4pm, 516-569-4814
DEC 19, NEW YORK CITY, New York Comic Book Convention, Ramada Hotel, 33rd and 7th Ave.,

A:$3.25, 10am-6pm, 908-788-6845
DEC 19, QUEENS, Comics & Sports Cards, Flushing Jewish Ctr., 43-00 171st St. (171st St. & Northern Blvd.), T:45 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 516-248-4235
DEC 21, QUEENS, Big Tuesday Nite Show, Cretan House, 32-33 31st St. (off Broadway in Astoria), T:50 A:$2, 718-545-9544
DEC 26, QUEENS, Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Rego Park Jewish Ctr., 97-30 Queens Blvd., T:32 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-795-4628
DEC 28, QUEENS, Big Tuesday Nite Show, Cretan House, 32-33 31st St. (off Broadway in Astoria), T:50 A:$2, 718-545-9544
DEC 29, BELLMORE, Comic Book & Sports Card Show, East Bay Temple, 2569 Merrick Rd., T:28 A:$1, 6-10pm, 516-795-4628
JAN 2, HICKSVILLE, Hicksville Monthly, Jerusalem Ave. & Maglie Dr., T:32 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-799-6412
JAN 9, WILLISTON PARK, Monthly Card & Comic Show, American Legion Post #144 (lower level), 730 Willis Ave., A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-289-7398
JAN 13, DEER PARK, Monthly Baseball & Sports Card Show, Sons of Italy—Constantino Brumidi Lodge, 2075 Deer Park Ave., A:Free, 6-10pm, 516-289-7398
JAN 15, LYNBROOK, Monthly Baseball Card & Comic Book Show, St. Mary's Knights of Columbus Hall, 78 Hempstead Ave. (.25 miles N. of Merrick Rd.), A:$1, 10am-4pm, 516-289-7398

NORTH CAROLINA

DEC 10-12, LUMBERTON, Heroes' Hangout Card & Comics Show, Biggs Park Mall, 2800 N. Elm St., T:35 A:Free, mall hours, 803-626-2788
DEC 18, GREENSBORO, Cardboard Hero's Comics & Sportscard Show, Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, 415 Swing Rd. (Exit 213 off I-40), T:40 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
DEC 19, FAYETTEVILLE, Cardboard Hero's Comics & Sportscard Show, Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, Cedar Creek Rd. (Exit 49 off I-95), T:37 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
DEC 26, RALEIGH, Cardboard Hero's Comics & Sportscard Show, Days Inn, 2805 Highwoods Blvd. (Exit 11 off I-440), T:30 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
JAN 2, DURHAM, Cardboard Heroes Comics & Sportscard Show, Holiday Inn West, 3460 Hillsborough Rd., T:33 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
JAN 15, BURLINGTON, Cardboard Heroes Comics & Sportscard Show, Ramada Inn, 2703 Ramada Rd. (Exit 143 off I-84), T:37 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969

OHIO

DEC 4, CHAMPION, Champion Comic Book & Card Show, Champion High School, 5976 Mahoning Ave. NW, T:35 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 216-847-8391
DEC 4, CINCINNATI, Infinity Holiday Comic Extravaganza, 2392 Wheeler St., A:Free, 11am-7pm, 513-723-0594
DEC 11, CINCINNATI, Infinity Holiday Comic Extravaganza, 2392 Wheeler St., A:Free, 11am-7pm, 513-723-0594
DEC 11-12, CORTLAND, Great American Comic Book & Sport Card Extravaganza '93, Lakeview High School, Hillman Dr., T:70 A:$2, 10am-8pm, 216-638-9506
DEC 12, DANTON, Jubilee Convention, Parke Hotel, 4343 Everhard Rd., A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587
DEC 12, COLUMBUS, Sportscard, NASCAR & Comic Show, 3660 S. High St., A:$.50, 10am-5pm, 614-236-2786
DEC 12, MENTOR, Card & Comic Show, Travelodge of Mentor, 7701 Reynolds Rd., T:35 A:$1.50, 10am-5pm, 216-255-5179
DEC 18, CINCINNATI, Infinity Holiday Comic Extravaganza, 2392 Wheeler St., A:Free, 11am-7pm, 513-723-0594
DEC 25, CINCINNATI, Infinity Holiday Comic Extravaganza, 2392 Wheeler St., A:Free, 11am-7pm, 513-723-0594
JAN 9, COLUMBUS, Sportscard, NASCAR & Comic Show, 3660 S. High St., A:$.50, 10am-5pm, 614-236-2786

OKLAHOMA

DEC 11, MUSKOGEE, Holiday Comic Book & Sport Cards Show, Civic Center, 415 Okmulgee Ave., T:30 A:Free, 9am-5pm, 918-687-7135

PENNSYLVANIA

DEC 11, PITTSBURGH, Jubilee Convention, Holiday Inn, Exit 11, A:$4, 10am-4pm, 301-292-4587
DEC 19, WILKES-BARRE, Comic Book, Baseball Card & Toy Show, Howard Johnson Hotel, 500 Kidder St., T:45 A:$2, 9am-6pm, 717-825-6957

RHODE ISLAND

DEC 16, WOONSOCKET, Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Elks Hall, 380 Social St., T:40 A:$1, 6pm-10pm, 401-765-0934

SOUTH CAROLINA

DEC 3-5, MYRTLE BEACH, Heroes' Hangout Card & Comic Show, Myrtle Square Mall, 2501 N. King's Hwy., T:50 A:Free, mall hours, 803-626-2788
DEC 18, HICKORY, Dragon's Expo Comic & Card Show, Clement Center, 1016 Hwy. 321 NW, A:$2, 803-327-1137

TENNESSEE

DEC 4, NASHVILLE, Legends Collectors Show, Airport Inn & Briley Pkwy., T:20 A:$2, Sat:10am-4pm, 706-234-8210
DEC 19, FRANKLIN, All-Star Promotions, Holiday Inn, Hwy. 96 Exit 65 (Franklin), T:25 A:$1, 9am-5pm, 615-780-3755

TEXAS

DEC 4, ARLINGTON, Championship Sportscard & Comic Show, 112 Forum 303 Mall, T:30 A:Free, 10am-9pm, 817-652-0204
DEC 4, HOUSTON, Comic & Card Convention, Hilton Hotel Southwest, 6780 SW Freeway (Exit Hillcroft), T:35 A:$2, 9am-4pm, 409-295-4353
DEC 5, HOUSTON, Comic Carnival '93, Holiday Inn—Clear Lake, 1300 NASA Rd. 1, T:40 A:$3, 10:30am-5pm, 713-659-1210
DEC 5, HOUSTON, Texas Comic Fair, Sheraton Internat'l Airport, T:50 A:$3, 10am-5pm, 512-480-8951
DEC 5, SAN ANTONIO, Baseball Card & Comic Book Show, Embassy Suites Northwest hotel, 7750 Briaridge (behind Malibu Fun Ctr.), T:40 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 713-449-8511
DEC 5, SAN ANOTONIO, Return of the Econo-Con, Seven Oaks Resort and Conference Ctr., 1400 Austin Hwy., T:40 A:$1, 10am-4pm, 210-655-6557
DEC 11, ARLINGTON, Sports Card & Comic Show, Comfort Inn, T:34 A:$2, 10am-5pm, 817-595-1039
DEC 11, HOUSTON, Comic & Card Convention, Hilton Hotel Southwest, 6780 SW Freeway (Exit Hillcroft), T:35 A:$2, 9am-4pm, 409-295-4353
DEC 11-12, LIVINGSTON, Sportscard & Comic Show, VF Factory Outlet Mall, 440 U.S. Hwy. 59, T:20 A:Free, Sat:9am-5:30pm, Sun:Noon-5:30pm, 409-295-3516
DEC 12, SAN ANTONIO, Sports Card & Comic Show, Wyndham Hotel, I-10 & Wurzbach Rd., T:35 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 210-431-0737
DEC 18, ARLINGTON, Championship Sportscard & Comic Show, 112 Forum 303 Mall, T:30 A:Free, 10am-9pm, 817-652-0204
DEC 18, QUINLAN, Comic Show, Mama Carmona's, West Forum Mall, 276 Hwy., T:15 A:Free, 10am-8pm, 903-356-2608
DEC 18, SAN ANTONIO, Comic & Card Convention, Wyndham Hotel, corners of I-10 and Wurzbach, T:45 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 409-295-4353
DEC 19, AUSTIN, Comic & Card Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 5901 N. I-35, T:45 A:$1.50, 10am-5pm, 409-295-4353
DEC 19, BEAUMONT, Baseball Card & Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn Beaumont Plaza, I-10 & Walden Rd., T:30 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 713-449-8511
DEC 19, HOUSTON, Comic & Card Convention, Holiday Inn, I-10 & Silber, T:45 A:$2, 10am-5pm, 409-295-4353
DEC 26, ARLINGTON, Sports Card & Comic Show, Comfort Inn, T:34 A:$2, 10am-5pm, 817-595-1039
DEC 26, HOUSTON, Baseball Card & Comic Book Show, Marriott Hotel—Westside, I-10 W. & Hwy. 6, T:40 A:$2, 10am-5pm, 713-449-8511

VERMONT

DEC 19, BURLINGTON, Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Sheraton Hotel, 870 Williston Rd., T:55 A:$1, 9:30am-3:30pm, 802-865-8981

VIRGINIA

DEC 4, FREDERICKSBURG, Comic & Sportscard Show, Best Western, 543 Warrenton Rd., T:29 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-7969
DEC 5, GREENVILLE, Sportscard & Comic Show, Hilton Inn, 207 S.W. Greenville Blvd., T:32 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
DEC 5, SPRINGFIELD, Sports Card & Comic Show, Springfield Hilton, 6550 Loisdale Rd. (Exit 169 off I-95), T:40 A:Free, 10am-4pm, 804-320-0136
DEC 11-12, NEWPORT NEWS, Virginia Peninsula Comic and Card Show, Newport News Inn, 6128 Jefferson Ave. (corner of Jefferson Ave. & Mercury Blvd.), T:35 A:$1, 10am-5pm, 804-887-5027
DEC 12, ALEXANDRIA, Sportscard & Comic Show, Quality Inn, 6461 Edsall Rd., T:32 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
DEC 12, TYSON'S CORNER, Comic & Non-Sportscard Show, 7801 Leesburg Pike, T:65 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 703-503-5834
DEC 18-19, NORFOLK, Christmas Collectors Show, Sheraton Inn, Military Circle Mall, T:18 A:Free, Sat:10am-6pm, Sun:10am-4pm, 804-463-2904
JAN 8, FREDERICKSBURG, Cardboard Heroes Comics & Sportscard Show, Best Western (Johnny Appleseed Inn), 543 Warrenton Rd. (Exit 133 off I-95), T:29 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969
JAN 9, ALEXANDRIA, Cardboard Heroes Comics & Sportscard Show, Quality Inn, 6461 Edsall Rd. (Exit 2A off I-395), T:32 A:$1.50, 9am-4pm, 804-231-1969

WEST VIRGINIA

DEC 4, DANVILLE, 2nd Annual Danville Christmas Comic Show, Danville Community Ctr., Phipps Ave., A:$1, 10am-5pm, 304-235-0735
JAN 9, CHARLESTON, W. Virginia Comic Con, Holiday Inn, Washington at Broad St., T:38 A:$2, 10am-4pm, 216-499-6056 ☆

HEY

Having a comic book show? Convention listings in the *Wizard* Show Calendar are

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E.G.O.*

THE BEST OF '93

by Todd McFarlane

Since this is the time of brotherly love and good cheer, we'll have a column that tells of all the good things that happened in the comics industry this past year. This is being written in October, so if there is any big news to come along, I'm sorry that it's not on this list. In no particular order, I will list each of the major superhero companies and what good things I feel they brought to the comic book community in 1993.

The Legend imprint, from my point of view, was a nice and significant event that was presented to us at the San Diego Comic Con by Dark Horse Comics. Legend is showing us that new imprints might be the way of the future, with the creative people owning and controlling the direction of their creations. Though it is my understanding that Dark Horse doesn't have exclusive rights to publish Legend's books, it's still nice to know that Mike Richardson and crew are matching the competition and staying on top of it by getting the best people they can to stay in its stable. Hopefully, Frank Miller, John Byrne, Arthur Adams, Mike Mignola, Dave Gibbons, Geof Darrow, and Paul Chadwick can put together a line of comics that doesn't have the bumps that we had with Image Comics, given that they aren't coordinating everything from top to bottom. I wish those guys the best of luck, and I thank Dark Horse for helping to put it together.

I thank Marvel Comics for trying to coordinate all of its X-Men and Spider-Man books and keeping those books alive. The X-Men and Spidey titles are its flagship characters and they should never be ignored, no matter what year and what the cause. Despite the loss of some major artists, the books have kept their heads above water and are still exciting books for fans who appreciate them. Kudos to the guys staying on top of those books.

With DC, the biggest shining lights of 1993 were the introduction of the Vertigo line and the expansion of the comic book audience by garnering national attention with the changes made with Superman and Batman. DC, probably more than any one publisher, reached out to the masses and got the word "comic book" in the newspapers and various mediums. Every time something like that happens, I think that, eventually and hopefully, one or more person reads that, are more curious about it, and become regular readers. For everyone who bought a Superman book, I believe that there has to be a few of them who are now hooked on comic books and are buying a wide array of them. Thanks, DC, for bringing in the customers.

I think the thing that Image Comics brought to the business was that we proved that even through some trying times, we were still able to persevere as a creative group, even though we coordinate and do everything from top to bottom. I think there should be a few more examples out there—and Legend will be one of them—that creative people can survive to do the things we want to do and own all the characters we want.

I thank Valiant for selling the idea that you can actually get books out at a reasonable rate, and have some sensibility in a cohesive comic book universe. I think that they will survive and endure, albeit at a slower rate after the speculator market leaves the entire industry. They should have a long, lucrative line of comic books as long as they keep doing the things that they are doing and try to attract more major talents. Thumbs up for going up against the big boys and surviving.

With Defiant, right or wrong, you've got to admire Jim Shooter's veracity and his "pissing in the wind" mentality. A lot has been written on whether or not what he's been saying is true or not, but whether it is or isn't, he actually stands by his convictions enough to keep going on. He's kind of like an Energizer battery, like the little bunny that goes on and on.

I give a lot of credit to Malibu Comics for trying to be the "Lil' Engine that Can." They could have folded their tents after Image left its fold, but they stuck around and came out with the Ultraverse, gave creators rights, met what was happening in the marketplace, and reformed the way they were doing business. Malibu has led the industry by example. The Ultraverse is based more on the creative end of how it's dealing with the talent and how it's structuring new contracts.

I must congratulate Topps Comics for bringing back some of Jack Kirby's work and not letting people forget that Jack Kirby is the "King." Topps ensures us that his characters will live on in different incarnations, whether with Marvel, DC, Image, or themselves. His influence should, by all means, live on forever.

To everybody else out there, I hope you have a lot of good reading, a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year. In 1994, I'll be back with my regular controversial, pissy attitude. Take care and goodbye. ☆

Any industry professional who wishes to respond to the opinions stated here should write to: E.G.O., P.O. Box 5001, Monsey, NY 10952-8001.

*EVERYONE'S GOT OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this column are not those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics* or its editorial staff.

collector's

SPORTSLOOK

PUTTING THE FUN BACK INTO COLLECTING

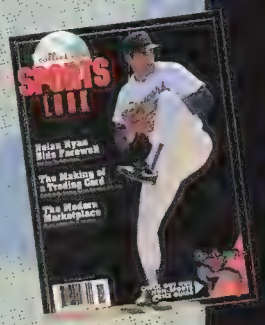
"Yes! I got Mike Schmidt's card. Yeah! I got Thurman Munson, too. Cool! Who'd you get?"

"I got Yaz and Pete Rose. Cool!"

"Cool. Let's go to Brian and Tim's house and see if they want to play some Wiffle."

"Cool."

LET *COLLECTOR'S SPORTSLOOK* TAKE YOU BACK



collector's SPORTS LOOK

W I Z A R D T O P T E N

top ten things bane coulda done to batman if he was meaner

10. Held him down and just kept touching his eyes.
9. Kidnapped Alfred, replacing him with Gilbert Gottfried.
8. Gotten front row tickets to the *Chevy Chase Show*; forced him to go.
7. Given Sean Young the Batcave's phone number.
6. Taken his toothbrush, swished it around in a urinal, and then put it back without telling him.
5. Sneaked into the Batcave every week, each time exchanging Batsuit with smaller 'n' larger costumes, thus driving Batman nuts.
4. Impersonated Wayne, called up Hollywood agent and acted like an S.O.B., causing cancellation of *Batman: The Animated Series*.
3. Screwed with his Thigh-Master.
2. Sat on his chest and kept singing the theme to the old *Batman* TV show over and over and over.
1. Gotten Tim Burton to direct the third Batman movie.

Congratulations

to the winners of *Wizard* #26's WEBHEAD contest (Answer: UNCLE BEN)

Grand Prize:

Huot Ly (age 15) - York, PA.

First Prize:

Skylar L. Primm (age 14) - New Orleans, LA.
Robert L. Brewer (age 21) - Wyandottee, MI.
Alex Shih (age 10) - San Diego, CA.

Second Place:

Seth Woods (age 12)- Houston, TX.
Vinnie Bonner (age 15) - Jack, FL.
Adam Redemer (age 16) - Conroe, TX.
Chris Huise (age 16) - Bountifull, UT.
John Ray Brown (age 41) - Palatka, FL.

Third Place:

Ken Seymour (age not given) - Freedom, IN.
Christine Nguyen (age not given) - Fremont, CA.
Douglas Everette (age 13) - Wake Forest, NC.
Alex Malana (age 13) - Sacramento, CA.
Mike Tennyson (age 16) - Tall Timbers, MD.
Joe Brontley (age 21) - Maynaedville, TN.
Thomas W. Smith (age 18) - Southlake, TX.
Bo Ma (age 12) - N. Miami Beach, FL.
Brad Thomas (age 16) - Blaine, TN.
Arnaldo Duran (age 14) - S. Ozone Park, NY.
Rey Aguilar (age 20) - San Antonio, TX.
Dennis Ibarra (age 13) - Fairlawn, NJ.
Steve Papadogiannis (age 12) - South Windsor, CT.
Bruce Soltys (age 13) - Newark, NJ.
Christopher Burgess (age 20) - Eugene, OR.
Chip Richardson (age 17) - Ypsilanti, MI.

SPECIAL THANKS

Lou Bank
Marvel Comics

Karen Berger
DC/Vertigo

William A. Christensen & Mark Seifert
Comic Cavalcade

Joseph Clark
Orangetown's Supervisor of Parks & Recreation

Antonia Coffman
Bongo Comics

Brady Darvin
Defiant

John Dennett
Dark Horse Comics

Kevin Dooley
DC Comics

Terry Fitzgerald
Todd McFarlane Prod.

Pat Garrahy & Gary Guzzo
Marvel Comics

Jon Hartz
Valiant

Matt Hawkins
Extreme Studios

Patty Jeres
DC Comics

Jeff Mariotte, Deborah Marvin & David Wohl
Homage Studios

Tom Mason
Malibu

Jerry Ordway
He knows where he is

Mark Paniccia
Malibu

Jim Perham
Valiant

Jane Sears
Sears Studios

Clark Smith
Defiant

Chris Ulm
Malibu

Steve & Cindy Vance
Bongo Comics

And a very special thanks to everyone we missed, and to all the readers out there who helped make *Wizard* the #1 Guide to Comics!

WIZARD: The Guide To Comics volume one, twenty-nine (29), January 1994.

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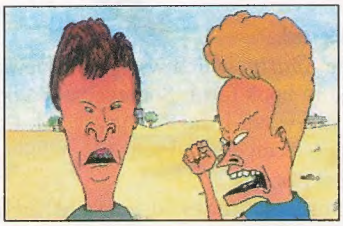
THE MONTHLY WIZARD FLASH - COMING NEXT MONTH

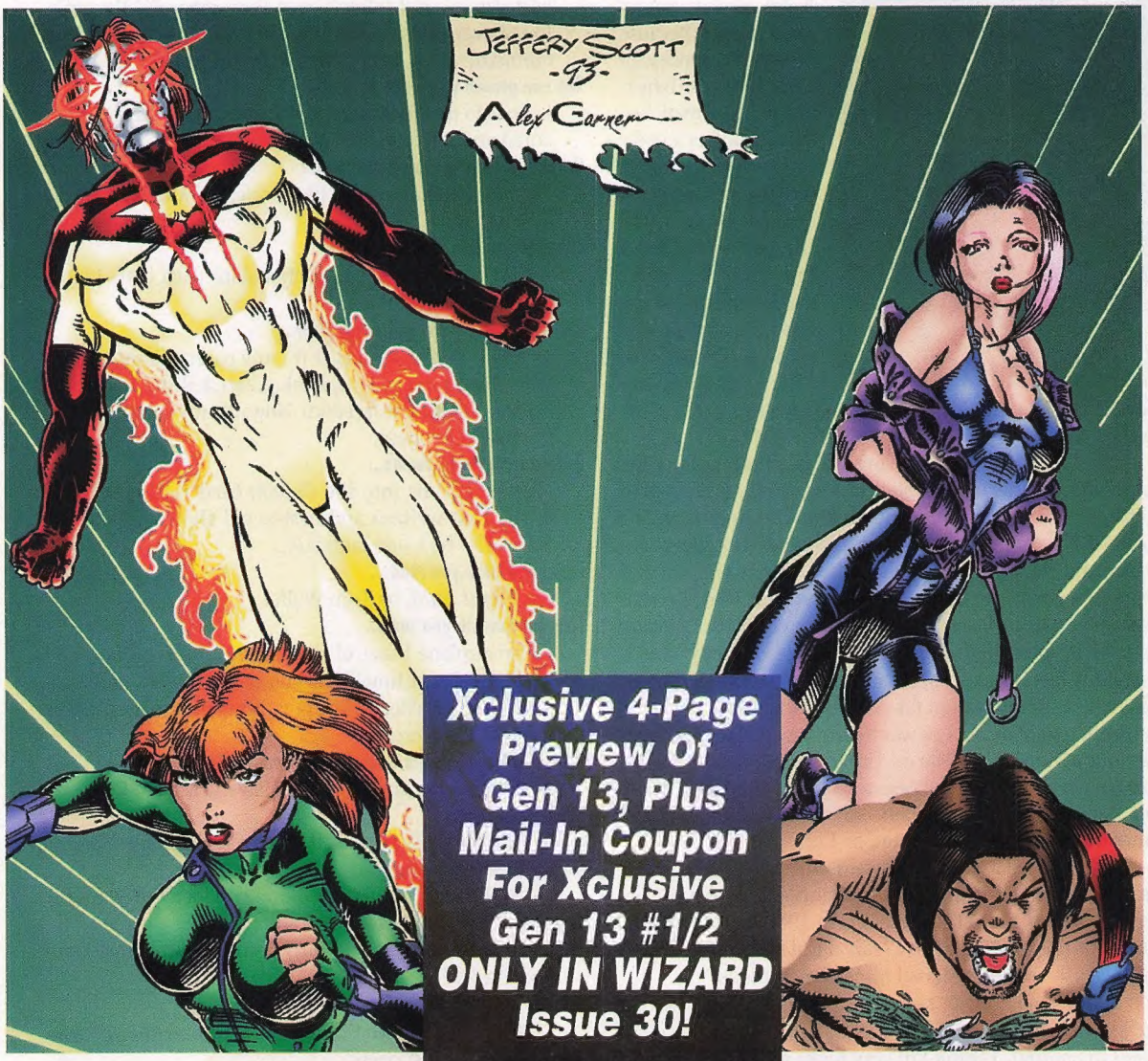
WIZARD

Beavis & Butt-Head make the Wizard cover! Plus... interview with creator Mike Judge and an ultra-secret B&B collectible! Its gonna be HOT!



Creator Portfolio card features all-out Matt Wagner ***Grendel*** art with spot-UV coating.

Todd McFarlane's ***Violator*** returns as an Image **Chromium Card** rendered by Greg Capullo!



Xclusive 4-Page Preview Of Gen 13, Plus Mail-In Coupon For Xclusive Gen 13 #1/2 ONLY IN WIZARD Issue 30!

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WIZARD Profile

SPIDER-MAN © & ™ MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

Here's looking at...STAN LEE

Stan Lee.

The name is widely recognized, and should be. Lee is known around the world as the publisher of Marvel Comics and the creative head of Marvel Entertainment...the person who "presents" every Marvel book...the guy who co-created Spider-Man and the Hulk...and as the man who helped shape practically every facet of the Marvel Universe in one way or another.

Born Stanley Martin Lieber, Lee got his first job at Marvel (known then as Timely Comics) in 1940, because staffers Joe Simon and Jack Kirby needed a young assistant, and because he was the nephew of Timely's publisher, Martin Goodman. Lee started out as a gofer but quickly took to writing comic book stories. He adopted the pen name Stan Lee, harboring hopes that he would one day be known by his real name as the author of "The Great American Novel." Lee's first published comic work was a prose piece in the back of *Captain America* #3 (May 1941).

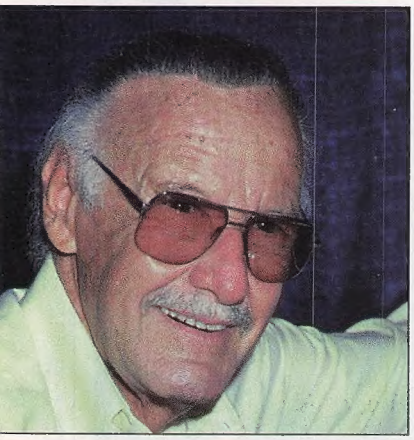

PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA

After Simon and Kirby left Timely in late 1941, Lee was the sole member of the creative staff; he was quickly promoted to editor. As the company's main creator, Lee languished for the next 20 years, trying to write its floundering superhero books, and suffering through trends of "funny animal" and romance comics. His biggest success came in 1961, in what was supposed to be Lee's swan song for comic books: *Fantastic Four* #1. A collaboration with artist Kirby, *Fantastic Four*'s popularity literally took off, because it placed characterization before plot, an innovation for comics of the time.

From that book on, Lee was instrumental in laying down the foundation of the Marvel Universe, and starting what was known as "The Marvel Age of Comics." Daredevil, Thor, Ant Man, Iron Man, the X-Men—all of these characters and more were in some way created by Lee.

Lee remained Marvel's editor-in-chief until 1972, when he gave up his full-time writing assignments to assume his present role as Marvel's publisher. In 1980, Lee went Hollywood as the creative head of Marvel Entertainment, where he presently oversees Marvel films and cartoons.

"Work is my hobby," says Lee. "I absolutely love what I do. I write, edit, work on movies and TV—I hop from one thing to another. I think I'm very lucky in that sense."

First comic book read...

It's called *Smitty*, which was an old newspaper strip reprinted in book form. Somebody had bought it for me as a gift when I was five years old. Comic books hadn't quite been created yet.

Favorite work of your own...

Often I'll read old stories I'd done and had forgotten all about. I'll say, "Wow, that was terrific! That's one of my best stories, and I didn't even remember it!" Recently, I read over the original Silver Surfer/Galactus issues of *Fantastic Four*. I thought they were wonderful.

The one person you'd like to meet...

Leonardo da Vinci, because he was one of the most talented and gifted people who ever lived.

What superpower would you want?

Maybe a mental power, like Professor X's. That would be cool.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....

A Nestlé's Crunch. I love chocolate with little bits of crunchy things in it.

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...

As a kid—I'll never forget it—my parents bought me a two-wheel bicycle. It was the greatest thing I ever got, because it gave me freedom. Now, it's my computer; I'm fascinated by them.

Favorite television shows...

My wife got me into the *Golden Girls* reruns. It's one of the best-written and best-acted shows. I also love *Seinfeld*—he's just fantastic.

Last good book you read...

The Right Stuff, by Tom Wolfe.

Last good movie you saw...

On an airplane I saw, of all things, *Homeward Bound*. I loved it. I was sitting like a fool, crying—tears were running down my cheeks! The guy sitting next to me must've thought I was *crazy*.

Who would play you in a movie about yourself?

At this age, the guy I'd love to play me is Sean Connery.

Favorite cartoon...

X-Men, you silly person! It will soon be *Spider-Man*.

Do you have a nickname?

"Stan the Man." I have absolutely no idea how I got it!

Person you would most like to work with...

I would *love* to work with Frank Miller and John Romita Jr.

Why do you read *Wizard*?

I figure if I stay with it long enough, someone will ask me to do an interview! ☆

The LEGEND Begins Now!

ON SALE NOW!

John Byrne's *Next Men: Faith*
Frank Miller's *Sin City: A Dame to Kill For*

COMING SOON FROM LEGEND:

Mike Mignola's *Hellboy*
Paul Chadwick's *Concrete*
John Byrne's *Next Men: Faith*
John Byrne's *Danger Unlimited*
Art Adams' *Monkeyman and O'Brien*
Frank Miller's *Sin City: A Dame to Kill For*
Frank Miller and Dave Gibbons'
Martha Washington Goes to War
Frank Miller and Geof Darrow's
The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot

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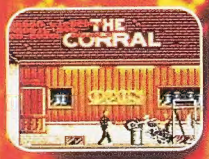
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMICS!™

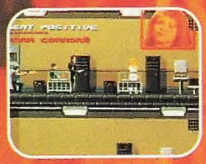
KICK SOME LIQUID METAL BUTT!

PREVENT JUDGMENT DAY



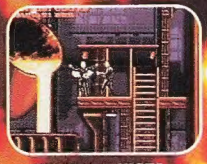
I NEED YOUR MOTORCYCLE

PROTECT JOHN CONNOR



OBJECTIVE: RESCUE SARAH CONNOR

DESTROY CYBERDYNE RESEARCH



HASTA LA VISTA, BABY!

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